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LOVERS' VOWS,

OR, THE

CHILD OF LOVE.

A PLAY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

77
AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE: *K*

WITH A

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR,

By STEPHEN PORTER,

Of the Middle Temple, & of Trinity College, Cambridge.

London :

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1798.



PREFACE.

ANOTHER translation of the following Play, having appeared already, and a very invidious advertisement having been published, either by Mrs. Inchbald, or the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, which I know to be aimed at me, I am compelled to state the facts which led me on to publication.—Near four months ago, a German gentleman put the Play into my hands, which I admired very much, and immediately determined to translate, for the purpose of presenting to one of the theatres. At that time, I translated very little of it; and a variety of more serious avocations prevented my making any farther progress till about a month ago, when I proceeded with it, and had it finished ready to offer to the proprietors of Drury-lane, on the very day in which, to my great surprise, I was informed it had been represented at Covent Garden, on the evening previous. These are facts well known to several of my friends; and, admitting them, I cannot think but I have the same right to publish the Play, as Mrs. Inchbald, or any one else: nay, it is very probable, I was engaged on it before she was.

What necessity there was for the advertisement, I have mentioned above, I am at a loss to imagine. Surely my conduct does not look like an attempt at

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Imposition;

Imposition ; nor can I suppose Mrs. Inchbald fears comparison between her alteration and the original ; though I am ready to own, I am decidedly of opinion, that the original has not, nor can be, amended.

With all deference to her sex, and the highest esteem for her talents, can Mrs. Inchbald think no person able to translate or alter a play for the English stage, but herself ? Or will the public believe that a genuine copy of the present Play, could only be procured through the agent of Kotzebue, in this country, when it is well known, that various editions of it have been published in all the principal cities in Germany ?

With respect to the translation, it will be found to contain the sense of the author, without either addition or omission. Indeed, my aim has been, not to mutilate or alter a single speech or sentence in it, being sensible that every attempt at one, would rob it of a beauty, and every attempt at the other, add a defect. I hope I shall be found to have given the literal meaning, and I trust somewhat of the spirit of the original, as far as the temper and genius of the two languages would admit me so to do. I have endeavoured to dress Kotzebue in an English dress ; and the public will now be able to judge whether he is more beautiful in the garb I have decked him in, or the disguise in which he has been represented at Covent Garden Theatre.

October 16, 1798.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY
OF
KOTZEBUE.

THE genius of the German dramatic writers has long been in high esteem with the literati of this country ; but it is only of late years that their productions have become generally known, through the medium of translations. The works of Schiller, Lessing, Iffland, and others, are now familiar to most English readers, and several of their dramas have been produced on our Theatres, with various success, both in a translated and an altered state. The “ Emilia Gallotti ” of Lessing, was translated and brought forward at Drury Lane Theatre, a few years since ; but though it had all the advantages that the finest acting and the most elaborate scenery and decorations could give it, after a few nights it was withdrawn. This might, in part, be owing to its not possessing that ingenuity and contrivance in the Fable, which has ever been the first requisite to render a

Play popular with an English audience. The translation of Schiller's Tragedy of the "Robbers," was so universally read, and so much admired, that, we believe, it was once in the contemplation of the Manager of Covent Garden to try the effect of it on the stage; but the genius of the Bohemian, like his native mountains and woods, was thought too rugged and terrible for the refinement of a British Theatre. The "Misanthropy and Repentance" of Kotzebue, brought forward in an altered state at Drury Lane last season, under the title of the "Stranger," met with much better success, being received with almost universal approbation; and the very favourable reception which his "Child of Love" has experienced, even in its garbled and mutilated state, affords an unequivocal proof that his talents are better calculated, than those of any of his countrymen, for the meridian of England. This is certainly owing to his uniting with the greatest knowledge of the human passions, a very great superiority in the construction of his Fable. A brief relation of the leading events of his life must, therefore, be acceptable to all his admirers.

Kotzebue

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF KOTZEBUE. v

Kotzebue was born at Weimar, in Saxony, a city which has long been considered as the most refined in Germany, as far as relates to the manners of its inhabitants; and is at present particularly famous for a seminary of education for young men of rank, which affords the students the double advantage of acquiring the most extensive learning, and of improving their manners by a constant intercourse with the Court of the reigning Duke, at present one of the most polished in Europe.—His predilection for the Drama displayed itself while he was very young; for in his youth he not only wrote, but performed in several private theatres, though, we believe, he never yet appeared on the public stage. He was educated under the celebrated professor Musæus; and early betook himself to the profession of the Law, which he practised with considerable success, filling various eminent stations, till, at length, he was appointed President of the high College of Justice, in the Russian province of Livonia, where he wrote a great number of his dramatic works, as well as his other miscellaneous compositions. The cabals of a party in Livonia, who envied his superior talents, compelled him, after some years, to resign his high situation;

tion; when, fortunately for the admirers of genius and learning, he resolved to devote himself entirely to literary pursuits, and accordingly repaired to the Court of Vienna, where he was shortly after appointed, "Director and Dramatist of the Imperial Theatre;" a place which he has ever since filled with pleasure to himself, and the greatest satisfaction to the Emperors he has lived under.

Such are the leading events in the public life of Kotzebue. With respect to his private history, his time has ever been too much occupied on his writings for it to be very interesting; but he has always been considered a man of the purest morals and virtue. In his youth, he was the favorite pupil of the learned Professor before mentioned; and it is now well known his resignation of his office, and leaving the Russian dominions, was owing to the malice of those who were enemies to the reforms he wished to introduce, and his having written a book entitled the "Life of Count Benjowsky," which, from certain anecdotes it contained, had given great offence to the late Empress.

The genius of Kotzebue is now so well known in this country, that it is almost unnecessary to comment

ment at all upon it. He has certainly studied the human heart, and explored the sources of the passions, with great care; and has gone farther in their display than almost any other writer: though it must at the same time be acknowledged, that in his anxiety to interest our feelings to the greatest degree, he sometimes loses sight of that morality which is so essential a part of the Drama. This observation may be applied with great justice to his play of "Misanthropy and Repentance," the moral of which is very defective. The present play, "the Child of Love," is, perhaps, the most perfect of his Dramatic Compositions, whether it be considered with respect to the Fable, the Action, or the Moral.

Kotzebue, besides several Romances, and a variety of miscellaneous compositions, has written about thirty Plays; among the most popular of which we find—"Misanthropy and Repentance," "the Negro Slaves," "the Indians in England," and the Play now before us.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Performed by

BARON VON WILDENHAIN, a
*German Nobleman, who has been
in the Army but is retired from
the Service,* MR. MURRAY.
AMELIA, his Daughter MRS. H. JOHNSTON.
THE PARSON of the Village on the
*Baron's Estate, performed under
the Name of ANHALT,* MR. H. JOHNSTON.
COUNT VONDERMULDE, per-
formed under the Name of
COUNT CASSEL, MR. KNIGHT.
WILHELMINA BOETTCHER,
performed under the Name of
AGATHA FRIBOURG, MRS. JOHNSON.
FREDERICK BOETTCHER, her
*Son, performed under the Name
of FREDERICK FRIBOURG,* MR. POPE.
A COTTAGER, performed under
the Name of HUBERT, MR. POWELL.
HIS WIFE.
CHRISTIAN, Butler to the Baron.
AN INN-KEEPER.
A FARMER.
A LABOURER.
A COUNTRY GIRL.
A JEW.
A HUNTSMAN.

SERVANTS, HUNTSMEN, &c.

SCENE—*The Castle and Village of Wildenhain.*

LOVERS' VOWS.

A C T I.

SCENE I.—*A public Road—the Entrance to a small Village—an Inn, &c.*

INN-KEEPER. (*forcing Wilhelmina out of doors.*)

I TELL you again, good mistress, you can stay no longer :—I have no more room for you. There is church-mass to-day in the next village ; and the peasants, with their wives and children, will call here on their return, and fill every corner of my house.

Wilhelmina. Can'st thou then turn a poor dying woman out of doors to perish ?

Inn-keeper. Marry, I do not turn you out—I merely compel you to walk out.

Wilhelmina. Your inhumanity will break my heart.

Inn-keeper. Nay, not quite so bad as that, I hope.

Wilhelmina. You know I have spent my last farthing in your house.

B

Inn-keeper.

Inn-keeper. That is the very reason I am tired of your company.—But what means have you of getting more ?

Wilhelmina. By the labour of my hands.

Inn-keeper. By the labour of your hands, indeed ! when you have hardly strength to move them.

Wilhelmina. I shall soon recover my strength.

Inn-keeper. When you do, come again, and you shall be welcome.

Wilhelmina. But where can I dwell till then ?

Inn-keeper. The season is in your favour ; and you can dwell where you please.

Wilhelmina. What, with only these poor habiliments to cover me ? Who will change them, when they are wet with the rain and dews of heaven ?

Inn-keeper. He who clothes the lilies of the field.

Wilhelmina. Or who will administer a morsel of bread to me, when I am hungry ?

Inn-keeper. He who gives food to the birds of the sky.

Wilhelmina. Merciless man ! you know I have not tasted food since yesterday morning.

Inn-keeper. Sick people seldom eat much ; and if they do, they are not the better for it.

Wilhelmina. I'll yet pay you honestly for your bounty.

Inn-keeper. Aye, marry, how ? The times are bad.

Wilhelmina. And so are my circumstances.

Inn-keeper.

Inn-keeper. Well, a truce with this, mistress. I'll tell you what; you are here on the high road—it is always much frequented :—ask for charity :—beg, beg!

Wilhelmina. Ask for charity !—beg !—No : rather let me starve.

Inn-keeper. This it is now to be a gentlewoman.—Many an honest mother's child has gone a begging, and thought nothing of it. Try it, try it :—Custom is every thing.

Wilhelmina. (*Sits down on a stone at the foot of a tree.*)

Inn-keeper. Here now, for instance, comes a man. I'll show you the way.

Enter a LABOURER, (with his bag of tools on his back.)

Inn-keeper. Good morning, master Nicholas.

Labourer. The same to you, master landlord.

Inn-keeper. Will you be kind enough to bestow your charity on this poor woman?

Labourer. (*having looked contemptuously on Wilhelmina, walks on.*) Good day to you, Landlord.

[*Exit Labourer.*]

Inn-keeper. What, not give her a farthing? To be sure, poor devil, he is but a labourer himself. But here comes the very man for your purpose, our farmer, a charitable being, who puts his farthings in the poor's box every Sunday. Surely the fat fellow will afford you one sup, mistress.

B 2

Enter

Enter a FARMER.

Inn-keeper. The best of all good mornings to you, master Farmer; here is a poor gentlewoman, who asks your charity.

Farmer. And is she not ashamed to do so? She is young, and may work.

Inn-keeper. She cannot at present—she is ill of a fever.

Farmer. It is hard enough for a man to get his own livelihood, now a-days; and money is scarce.

Inn-keeper. Only give her as much as will buy her some food, to comfort her empty stomach. She is almost starving.

Farmer. The harvest has turned out bad; and the distemper has carried off the best of my cattle.

[Exit the Farmer.]

Inn-keeper. A stingy, niggardly wretch! A fellow that is hatching his old dollars.—But the word hatching, puts me in mind of our old hen, that is expected to hatch her chickens to-day—I must look after them.

[Exit the Inn-keeper into the Inn.]

WILHELMINA *sola.*

(In a mean dress, her countenance pale from sickness and grief, but still possessing the remains of former beauty.)

Thou knowest, O God, it was not so, while I had one farthing left. Receive the humble tribute of my thanks,

thanks, O Supreme Being, that thou has yet preserved me from despair.—Could I but return to my wonted labour—but, alas ! the fever has so shaken my frame, so robb'd me of my strength !—O, could my Frederick know that his mother was starving :—Does my son live, or does the grave hide his remains ? Oh, no, no, Lord of Heaven, no : I live but to see him once again.—Yet thou, O author of all my sufferings !—but I'll not curse thee.—May the blessings of Heaven fall on thee, if they can fall on the seducer of innocence.—Oh, could'st thou now behold thy once beloved and blooming Wilhelmina, clothed in these rags, reduced to this wretchedness—how would thy heart be wrung with anguish ?—But, alas ! I faint with hunger, and have not even bread to eat.—Patience ! Surely I shall not be left to perish on the highway.

Enter a PEASANT GIRL, (with eggs and milk.)

Girl. (seeing Wilhelmina) Good morrow to you, good mother.

Wilhelmina. My thanks to you, dear child :—have you a morsel of bread, to give a poor hungry woman ?

Girl. (in an accent of pity) A morsel of bread ? No : indeed I have no bread.—Are you hungry ?

Wilhelmina. In good sooth, very hungry.

Girl. Oh, how sorry I am, that I have ate up all
my

my breakfast; and, I have not even money to give you. However, I am going to the next market-town, where I shall sell my eggs and milk; and, on my return, I promise you some money.—But, in the mean time, you will be starved.—Can't you drink some of my milk?

Wilhelmina. O yes, dear child.

Girl. Come then, do: drink, drink! (*raising the pail to Wilhelmina's mouth, and making her drink*) Will you not take more? Do not be afraid, but drink. I give it you with all my heart.

Wilhelmina. No more, my good girl: I have drank enough to raise my declining spirits. May Heaven bless you for it!

Girl. I am glad it has done you good. Farewell, mistress—God bless you. (*nodding good-naturedly*)

[*Exit the peasant girl.*]

Wilhelmina. Such once was I! so happy, so cheerful, so sensible of all that was good.

Enter a SPORTSMAN, (with a gun, and a brace of pointers.)

Wilhelmina. Success to your sports, Sir.

Sportsman. (walking on) Damn the old hag! she, forsooth, must be the first person I meet. Now shall not I get a claw. Go to the devil, you old witch.

[*Exit sportsman.*]

Wilhelmina. Unfeeling wretch! that would hide
the

the harshness of his heart, under the cloak of superstition. But here comes a man of another description, a Jew. Could I bring myself to supplicate relief, to him would I stretch out my hand for that charity, of which Christians have but the name.

Enter a JEW, who stops and looks at Wilhelmina.

Wilhelmina. Good morning to you, Sir.

Jew. Thanks to you, poor woman:—you don't look well.

Wilhelmina. I have been long ill of a fever.

Jew. (*putting his hand hastily into his pocket, and drawing out a small purse, from which he gives Wilhelmina money*) There! take that, and be satisfied. I have but little for myself. [*Exit Jew.*

Wilhelmina. (*addressing him as he goes off, with great emotion*) A thousand—thousand thanks to you! —Was I mistaken?—Did my heart tell me wrong? —This is, indeed, religion and charity; but how widely separated the one from the other!

Enter FREDERICK, (his knapsack on his shoulders, walking quick, and singing to himself.)

Frederick. (*Seeing the Inn*) Hem! why not refresh myself here? First, however, I must consult the purse, (*taking out his money.*) This, I think, will do for breakfast, (*counting out the money on his open hand*) and this for dinner:—at night, with
Heaven's

Heaven's blessing, I shall see home, and my mother. Well then, I am very dry. Hollo, landlord! But stop, (*seeing Wilhelmina*), here is a poor woman who looks worn down by sickness and grief. It is true, she does not beg; still her appearance calls aloud for relief. Must we always wait till asked? Fie!—no: however I must now put off the breakfast to save the dinner. Well, it comes in the end to the same thing;—for to relieve the miseries of our fellow creatures, allays both hunger and thirst. There! (*approaching Wilhelmina, and giving her the money he had counted out for his breakfast*).

Wilhelmina. (*Looking in Frederick's face and screaming*) My Frederick!

Frederick. (*Throwing away his money, knapsack, &c. and falling into Wilhelmina's arms*) My mother! (*after continuing sometime speechless*) Good Heavens, mother, to find you thus!—Speak, dear parent—tell me what ails you!

Wilhelmina. (*in a faltering voice*) I can—not—speak, dear son—dear Frederick; my joy—my joy—

Frederick. Revive, dear mother! revive! (*placing her head on his bosom*) How you tremble! you will die in my arms!

Wilhelmina. I am so weak—so faint—I had nothing to eat all the day yesterday.

Frederick. (*rising hastily and covering his face with both his hands*) O God of Heaven! (*taking bread from his knapsack*) Here is bread. Here too is the
little

little money I have. (*picking up the money he had thrown away*) My cloaths, my sword, all I have, will I sell for you. Alas, my poor mother!—Hollo, landlord! (*knocking at the door of the Inn.*)

Inn-keeper. (*from the window*) Hollo! what's the matter now?

Frederick. A bottle of wine here—this instant.

Inn-keeper. A bottle of wine?

Frederick. Yes, yes.

Inn-keeper. For whom?

Frederick. For me:—In the Devil's name, make haste.

Inn-keeper. Patience, master soldier! patience!—Can you pay for it?

Frederick. Here is money. Make haste, or I'll dash your windows into a thousand pieces.

Inn-keeper. Patience! patience! young soldier. (*shuts the window*)

Frederick. (*to his mother*) Nothing to eat! All the day and nothing to eat.—and I had to eat!—I feasted yesterday on plenty while my mother was starving. O God! how are all my sweets turned to bitterness!

Wilhelmina. Forget that, my Frederick!—I see you again, and I again am happy and well. I was very ill, and despaired of ever seeing you more.

Frederick. Very ill! and your Frederick not with you! But I'll never again leave you. See, my mother,

C

ther,

ther, how tall and stout I am grown! I'll labour for you.

Enter the INN-KEEPER, with a bottle and glass.

Inn-keeper. Here is the wine—wine of the first growth—a most noble liquor. Franconia wine to be sure; but as sweetly flourish as hock.

Frederick. Give it me — What costs the trash?

Inn-keeper. Trash! the loveliest gift of Heaven, trash! No, Sir, my wines are not trash. I have in my cellar a most costly French wine, which you must taste—so rich, and so oily, that it hangs about the glass long and long after it is emptied.

Frederick. Give it me, I say. (*out of patience, and attempting to take it*).

Inn-keeper. Must I ever be preaching patience to you? First the money.—It is a half-dollar bottle.

Frederick. Here, here! (*giving him all the money he has, and then pouring out wine for his mother, which she drinks, and eats some bread with.*)

Inn-keeper. Here is a kreutzer short of half a dollar: (*counting the money*) however a man must sometimes be charitable. There is no great harm in giving a trifle to a poor sick woman; but take care of the bottle and glass, honest ans. There is on the glass (*turning to Frederick*) a most beautiful German rhyme.*

[*Exit the Innkeeper.*]

Wilhelmina. Thanks, thanks, dear son! (*giving*

* In Germany it is usual to have verses cut on the drinking glasses

the glass back to Frederick) Wine from any one gives strength ; but from a son's hand, it gives new life.

Frederick. Do not talk too much, mother: you will weary yourself.

Wilhelmina. Tell me, then, how you have lived these five years.

Frederick. The creature of chance and accident—I was well, and not well—had plenty one day, the next day nothing. In short, I had by turns every thing.

Wilhelmina. It is very long since you wrote to me.

Frederick. Consider, mother, with what difficulty a poor soldier affords the postage. Think only on the distance. The savings of half a year would be spent on a single letter. Still a man must live. Besides, thought I, my mother is well and I am well; and a letter may be deferred awhile: in this manner I delayed writing one week after another. Forgive my neglect, mother.

Wilhelmina. When grief is past, forgiveness soon follows. But have you obtained your discharge?

Frederick. Not yet: I have only got leave of absence, for a couple of months, for a certain purpose. However, as my mother needs me, I'll stay with her.

Wilhelmina. By no means, my son. Your visit will soon give me health and strength; and once restored to them, and enabled to work, I shall be anxi-

ous for your return, lest your stay should hinder your promotion. But leave of absence you tell me you have for a certain purpose—May a mother know that purpose?

Frederick. Did I ever conceal a thought from you? No! nor will I now.—When I departed, five years ago, for the army, you furnished me liberally with every thing: one thing only was wanting, which you, perhaps, thought of little consequence—a certificate of the legitimacy of my birth. I was at that time a wild thoughtless youth, and did not much regard it; but it has since given me great uneasiness, not to have it. Sometimes quite tired of the idle, useless life of a soldier, I intended procuring my discharge, and turning a useful mechanic; but when I went and said to the master of a shop, “Good Sir, will you take me as an apprentice,” the first question always was, “Have you a certificate of the legitimacy of your birth?” This vexed me, and I resolved to continue a soldier. There they only ask if a man’s heart be in the right place; and a certificate of birth avails as little as a patent of nobility.—In spite of my caution, my comrades got a knowledge of the fact; and when they wished to make me angry, or were in liquor, plagued and tormented me. I was then forced to fight them, was put under arrest, and reprimanded by my captain. Five weeks ago I had another such a quarrel, when he ordered me to his quarters.—My captain, mother, is a good and humane
man,

man.—“Boettcher,” says he, “you are always quarrelling with your comrades, and deserve punishment every hour. I do not approve of your conduct in this respect; and the less so, as in every other, it merits my praise. The serjeant has informed me the cause of these disagreements; and to prevent them in future, write for the certificate of your birth, or rather, fetch it yourself. As the time of exercising the troops is over, I give you leave of absence for two months.”—Your lov’d form, my dear mother, at that moment seem’d to stand before me:—I kissed his hand, and murmur’d my thanks. He put a dollar into my hand, and said: “Go, my son, and the blessing of heaven go with you; only return in due time.”—These circumstances led to my departure, and now you see me here.

Wilhelmina. (*having listened with great attention and anxiety*) And you are come, my Frederick, for this certificate?

Frederick. Purposely for it.

Wilhelmina. Almighty powers! (*with emotion*)

Frederick. What is the matter, mother?

Wilhelmina. Oh, God, God! (*in great agony and bursting into tears.*)

Frederick. For heaven’s sake, mother, what ails you?

Wilhelmina. You can have no such certificate.

Frederick. No? Why not?

Wilhelmina. You are a Child of Love.

Frederick

Frederick. A Child of Love! and who is my father?

Wilhelmina. Do not turn your eyes so wildly on me: your looks will blast me.

Frederick. (mildly and tenderly) O no, dear mother, no! Am I not still your son? But tell me, who is my father.

Wilhelmina. When you left home for the army, you were too young to be entrusted with the secret. Now you are arrived at manhood;—the manhood, I trust, of courage and virtue.—All the hopes I once fondly formed are now realized.—How often have I been told of the bliss of imparting one's sufferings to a feeling mind. The tears that trickle down another's cheek, make Misery forget its own. Thank heaven, the hour is now arrived, when I can taste that bliss myself. My confidential friend is my son; let him be my judge too. The sentence of a severe judge I should tremble at; but from a son, may I not hope for mercy?

Frederick. Speak, dear mother, speak! Give vent to the feelings of your heart.

Wilhelmina. I will tell you all; and yet shame checks my tongue—You cannot look on me.

Frederick. Do I not know the purity of my mother's heart? Cursed be that thought of mine, that would dare condemn you for a weakness—a crime of which you could never be guilty.

Wilhelmina. The steeple you see yonder, stands in the village which gave me birth. In that church I
was

was christened; there I received my first instructions in the principles of our holy religion. My parents were peasants—poor, but honest. At the age of fourteen years, the lady of the manor, who saw me by accident, took a fancy to me; and taking me under her protection, was pleased to cultivate my rude manners. I learned French and music; and she furnished me with a variety of books which I perused with attention. The natural powers of my mind were thus displayed, and, at the same time, my vanity. Under the mask of discretion, I grew a vain, giddy girl.—I was more than seventeen, when the son of my noble benefactress, who had been employed on foreign service, obtained permission to visit his mother. I had never seen him before; and he was a noble, handsome, generous youth. He talked to me of love and marriage.—He was, alas! the first that ever did homage to my charms.—But do not look on me, my son, if you wish me to proceed in my sad tale.

Frederick. (casting his eyes downwards, presses his mother's hand to his breast.)

Wilhelmina. (after a pause) Feeble creature that I was, I was soon robbed of my innocence! He still feigned love, promised marriage at his mother's death, and vowed eternal constancy. Thus I forgot the piety of my parents, the generosity of my patroness, and—became pregnant.—O son! son! when I turn my eyes to that steeple, the good old man, the rector, stands before me with his venerable silver hair.

How

How feelingly he touched my mind, when, for the first time, I went to prepare myself for the Lord's Supper! How did my heart then overflow with virtue and religion! In that moment, sure of victory, I would have ventured it even with a seducer. But, alas! these strong impressions were soon wiped away by the fond glances and soft words of a heedless boy. How it could be, I know not.—When pregnant, I awoke from my delusive dreams: my seducer awoke with me, and the most horrid apprehensions distracted us. I had sacrificed every thing; he had only to dread the anger of his mother, a good, but severe, woman. How he flattered my hopes, how he intreated me not to give him up to her vengeance! how he promised, at her death, to make ample atonement for every thing! I then gave him my word to keep the secret, and to conceal the name, as well as the image, of my seducer, in the inmost recesses of my heart—to suffer all for his sake: for oh! I loved him. He parted from me with reluctance.—The time of my delivery approached.—I could no longer hide my condition.—Alas! they treated me very cruelly, when I refused to name the father of my child.—I was turned out of doors; and when I sought an asylum with my parents, even they refused me one. My father harshly reproached me; and, but for my mother, would have cursed me. When my mother left me, she threw me a dollar, with a ring to it, which she then wore about her neck, wept over me, and from that time I never saw

saw her more.—That dollar I have still; (*drawing it from her bosom*) and I had rather die with hunger than part with it. (*She kisses the dollar and puts it again into her bosom*) Without a home, and friendless, I wandered about a whole night. Once as I approached the river's side, there where the mill stands, wrought into a frenzy of despair, I resolved to throw myself under the wheels, and so to end my wretched existence. Just then, the good old rector, with his reverend looks, appeared before me. I started, and looking round as if he really had been present, felt a confidence in him and his precepts once more roused within me. The morning came, and I hastened to his house. He received me with tenderness, and without reproaching me, said, "What is done, is done.—Repentance will atone for, and a return to virtue amend every thing. Here, however, in the village you cannot stay:—it would give grief to yourself and offence to the community at large.—But"—putting, at the same time, into my hands some gold, together with a letter he had written for me—"go up to town, my daughter, and deliver this letter to a friend of mine, an honest widow, who will receive you with kindness, and afford you every assistance in her power. She will also point out to you the means of obtaining a livelihood with comfort. With these words, he laid his hand upon my forehead, and blessed me; nay more, he promised to get my father reconciled to me. At that moment I felt, as it were, new born.—On my way to town, I made my peace with heaven, and vowed

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never

never more to stray from the paths of virtue ; and I have kept my vow. Now, my son, you may look on me again.

Frederick. (clasps his mother in his arms without speaking.)

Wilhelmina. (continues) Thy birth gave me as much joy as pain. I wrote twice to your father ; but, God knows whether he received my letters—I never received any answer.

Frederick. Never received any answer ! (in great emotion.)

Wilhelmina. Why these emotions ? why these wild starts of passions ?—It was in the midst of a campaign, when three hostile armies were chasing each other through the country, and his regiment was among them ; how easily in such confusion might a letter be lost ! He cannot have received them ; for he was not so base, but he would have answered them. From that time I would not trouble him more.—Call it pride or what you will. I thought if he had not abandoned me, he would return in search of me, and the good rector knew where to find me. But, alas ! he did not return ; and after a few years, I heard (*sighing deeply*) he was married. So perished all my hopes. Obscured in humble and lonely lodgings, I procured what our necessities called for, by the labour of my hands, and teaching what I had learnt in the house of the noble lady, my patroness. You, my dear Frederick, was then my only joy. In educating you I spent all I could save, and even deprived

prived myself of the little comforts of life.—But the care of the mother has been rewarded by the duty of the son. You grew an amiable, good boy.—My apprehensions, however, were constantly alarmed by your hasty, boyish temper, your love of a military life, and your eagerness to throw yourself on the wide world. At length I thought—The will of Heaven be done :—if it be his destiny, my utmost endeavours will not prevent it. So I parted with you, five years ago, giving you as much money and apparel as I could afford, perhaps more: for when in health we seldom reflect that we are liable to sickness. Had I continued to enjoy good health, I should have earned more than I wanted; and sent you each year my little savings as a Christmas present. But I long since fell into a decline—my daily earnings ceased, and the small sum I had laid by was barely sufficient to procure me necessaries. Unable at last to find money to pay the rent of my lodgings, I was forced to leave them; and now wander about the country with only this staff, this bag, and these rags, and seek for charity on the public roads.

Frederick. How would the slightest preface of your sufferings have embittered all the enjoyments of your Frederick! But, thank Heaven! you are still alive, and I am with you, and will stay with you for ever! I'll write to my Captain—he may call my absence desertion—I care not—I *will* continue with my mother. Oh, how I regret that I have not learned a mechanical trade! However, my arms are robust

enough to handle the plough and the threshing-flail.— I will hire myself to a farmer—will labour by day—copy for attornies by night—for I write a good hand, which I owe to you, mother. O it will prosper :—with God's blessing it must prosper ; and God's blessing ever falls on filial affection.

Wilhelmina. (*embracing Frederick with great tenderness*) Let now a queen offer me her son for mine !

Frederick. One thing you have forgot to tell me, mother—what is the name of my father ?

Wilhelmina. Baron Wildenhain.

Frederick. What, he who is lord of this manor ?

Wilhelmina. The same. His mother used to reside here ; but she is dead ; and he, having married the heiress of a wealthy family in Franconia, has, for his wife's sake, as I am informed, forsaken his estates here, and the steward now manages the affairs of the castle as he pleases.

Frederick. I will go and visit my father—will boldly force my way into his presence—will carry you to him on my back. How far is it to his castle in Franconia ? It cannot be more than twenty or thirty miles. Has he gone no farther from the scene of his guilt, and yet left conscience behind ? Has it crept after him these twenty years, and not yet overtaken him ? Fie ! fie ! Why must I have a father, whose crimes will not let me esteem him ? Why was not my heart satisfied with a mother, whose virtues inspired me with love ? Why did I ask to know a
father,

father, whose vices inspire me with hatred?—No: I will not visit him—let him stay where he is—let him banquet on his guilt to his last hour—but let him tremble at the dreadful day of account. We can do without him—we shall.—But what is so suddenly the matter with you? Your eyes grow dim—What ails you, mother?

Wilhelmina. (in a low voice and near fainting) Nothing, nothing:—my joy, and talking too much—would I could repose myself awhile.

Frederick. Good God, I had forgot we were in the public road. Hollo, landlord. (*knocking at the door of the inn.*)

Inn-keeper. (*from the window*) Hollo, what is the matter now?

Frederick. Let me have a good bed for this woman immediately.

Inn-keeper. (*furlily*) A good bed for this woman, indeed! Ha, ha, ha! She lay last night in my stable, and bewitched all my cattle. (*shutting the window*)

Frederick. Damned villain! (*enraged and taking up a stone, which, looking at his mother, he drops*) Oh, my poor mother! (*he knocks in great distress at other doors*)

Enter a PEASANT from one of the cottages.

Peasant. Good morrow, Sir: what would you here?

Frederick. Look on this poor woman, my friend—she is my mother, and, I am fearful, will perish under
the

the open sky. Allow her, for pity's sake, a corner of your house, to repose herself in. The God of mercies will reward you for it.

Peasant. Very well : I understand you. Betty !
(*calling into the house*) beat up the bed, and lay the boy, meanwhile, on the bench before the oven. Don't talk so much of God's rewarding, Sir : (*to Frederick*) were God to reward every trifle, he would have enough to do. Come, lay hold of the poor woman, that we may carry her as gently as possible into the house—there she shall have the best bed I have ; beyond that, little is to be expected from a poor man.
(*carrying Wilhelmina into the cottage*)

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Inside of the Peasant's Cottage.*

Wilhelmina seated upon a wooden chair, and reclining her head on the bosom of Frederick.

FREDERICK (*to the Peasant and his Wife, who run busily about, at a loss what to do.*)

AND have you nothing, good people, to give her to comfort her ?

Wife. Pray, run, husband, and fetch a bottle of wine from our neighbour, the Inn-keeper.

Frederick. No : his wine is as sour as his heart is hard—She has drank of it already, and I am fearful it has turned to poison.

Peasant. The black hen has cackled, wife, look after her. Perhaps a warm, new-laid egg, would do the poor woman good.

Wife. Or a handful of ripe currants.

Peasant. Or, better than all—a rasher of bacon.

Wife. There is half a pint of brandy in the dairy.

Frederick. (*in great concern*) May Heaven reward
your

your charity ! Have you heard them, dear mother ?
(to *Wilhelmina*)

Wilhelmina. (nods assent)

Frederick. Do you wish for any thing ?

Wilhelmina. (makes signs of denial.)

Frederick. Alas ! she wishes nothing. Have you
no doctor in your village ? (to the *Peasant*)

Peasant. There is a horse-doctor lives at the lower
end of it—I never heard of any other.

Frederick. Gracious God ! what can I do ? She
will die in my arms. Father of mercies, take pity on
us. Pray, good people, pray ! I—cannot pray.

Wilhelmina. (in a very faint voice) Peace, my
Frederick ! I am better—but still weak, very weak—
A glass of good generous wine—

Frederick—Yes, dear mother, yes, this moment—
but, good Heavens, how ? I have no money—not
one farthing.

Wife. I wish, husband, you had not paid your rent
yesterday.

Peasant. Aye, we could then assist them. But
what can be done now ? Believe me, I have not a far-
thing of money, any more than yourself, Sir. (to *Fre-
derick*)

Frederick. Then will I go, and ask for charity ;
and, if they refuse me charity—rob. Dear people,
take care of my mother—Assist her as well as you
can—I'll soon be here again.

[Exit *Frederick* in great precipitation:

Peasant.

Peasant. If he meets with our rector, and asks charity from him, he will relieve all his wants.

Wilhelmina. Is your old rector still alive !

Wife. O no : — the good man died sometime since, full of years, and tired of life—Heaven rest his soul !

Peasant. He went off like the light of a lamp.

Wife. (*wiping her eyes*) We all wept for him.

Peasant. (*wiping his eyes*) Yes : he was our father.

Wilhelmina. (*with some emotion*) Our FATHER ?

Wife. We shall, indeed, never more see his fellow.

Peasant. Well, well, give every one his due—we should despise no one. The present rector is a very worthy, amiable man.

Wife. True, husband, but he is so very young.

Peasant. To be sure, every thing does not become him quite so well, nor does he inspire so much confidence ; but our late parson was young once.

Wife. (*to Wilhelmina*) The present rector was tutor to the Baron's only daughter ; and my lord was so well satisfied with his conduct, that he gave him this living.

Peasant. Which he has well deserved : for the young lady is, God bless her ! a most lovely, benevolent creature.

Wife. So condescending ! When she goes to church, she nods this way, and that way, and notices all the women in the village.

Peasant. And when she gets to her pew, she opens her fan, and prays so devoutly.

E

Wife.

Wife. And during the sermon does not turn her eyes from the parson one moment.

Wilhelmina. (*anxiously*) Of what young lady are you speaking?

Peasant. Of the daughter of the lord of this manor.

Wilhelmina. Is she now here?

Peasant. Yes: Did not you know it? Next Friday will be five weeks since the whole family came to reside at the castle.

Wilhelmina. What, the family of Baron Wildenhain?

Peasant. Aye; and himself too.

Wilhelmina. And his lady?

Peasant. No: she is dead. They have lately lived some hundred miles from hence, in France. As long as her ladyship lived, we never saw his lordship here, which, at times, we took much amiss. (*familiarly*) They say she was a very proud, arrogant woman, and had many strange fancies; but as she is dead, let us say the best we can of her. His lordship, on the contrary, has ever been a benevolent, good man; and as soon as she had closed her eyes, ordered his whole retinue to prepare for Wildenhain, which to be sure is his native place. Here he was reared, and here, when a boy, he used to play with us, in the meadow; many a Sunday, when he was young, has he danced with my wife round the lime-tree. Don't you recollect it, Betty?

Wife. Is it possible I can forget it? The young lord was dressed in scarlet, and had beautiful sparkling stone buckles in his shoes.

Peasant.

Peasant. After that, when he went into the army, he grew a little wanton. Young folks, however, will, somehow or other, always have their vagaries. The soil was never bad; but the best soil will sometimes produce tares.

Wife. Yes: but do you remember, husband, what a sad piece of business he made of it with Boettcher's daughter, Mina? That surely was not right.

Peasant. Pray, wife, don't talk of that any more: you are ever dishing up the same pottage over and over again. And, take it all together, it is by no means certain that the child should be fathered on him. She confessed nothing.

Wife. I will lay the best gown I have, it could be fathered on no one else.—No, husband, you must not defend such an impious wicked deed. The poor girl no doubt has long since died of grief and hunger, God knows where; and old Boettcher, her father, would have been alive till now, had it not been for his daughter's shame.

Wilhelmina (faints away).

Peasant. (who observes it first) Betty, Betty, for God's sake, support the poor woman.

Wife. Good heavens, she is dying.

Peasant. Make haste, let us carry her gently into the bed-room; and I will then run for the parson: she will hardly live out the morning.

[Exeunt the Peasant and his Wife carrying off Wilhelmina.]

SCENE II. *A Breakfast Parlour in the House of the Colonel, Baron Wildenhain.—The Tea Table covered.—A Footman brings in the Tea Urn, and a lighted Wax Taper.—The Colonel in his Morning Gown.*

Colonel. Is the stranger still in bed?

Footman. No, my lord, he has by this time his hair dressed.

Colonel. So I might have guessed: for the whole anti-chamber is perfumed with *poudre à la marechal*. Call my daughter. (*Exit Footman*) I am afraid my old friend, (*filing his pipe*) the privy counsellor, has incumbered me with a coxcomb. Every thing he says or does, is as flat and insipid as his countenance.—No, I'll not be in a hurry: I love my Amelia too well. We must get a little better acquainted with our guest; nor must my daughter be made unhappy for the sake of an old friendship. The poor girl, indeed, is so innocent, she would very readily give her consent; but hereafter would be sorry for it, and curse a father who ought to have known better. It is a pity the girl is not a boy: the family of Wildenhain will now be extinguished, as this light is. (*putting out the wax taper after he had lighted his pipe*) My excellent estates, my large plantations, my wealthy tenantry, all must go to a stranger. A sad thing this!

[*Enter Amelia in a morning dress.*

Amelia. (*approaching and kissing her father's hand*) Good morning, dear father.

Colonel.

Colonel. Good morning, Amelia. Did you sleep well last night?

Amelia. Yes.

Colonel. Indeed? Did you sleep very well? Were you not at all restless?

Amelia. No, not for a moment, except that sometimes the gnats were troublesome.

Colonel. The gnats? Well, they are of little consequence, you may drive them away by the smoke of Juniper berries. But there is a species of maggots, of which you cannot get rid so easily.

Amelia. By means of sublimate, I suppose it might be done.

Colonel. (*smiling*) You are a very happy girl, if you have no other maggots than those you can kill by sublimate.

Amelia. Other maggots? You mean, perhaps, those which bite here in the head? No, thank God, I am not troubled with them.

Colonel. So much the better for you. But, indeed, how is it possible a girl of sixteen should be troubled with them, who has a father that loves her and a lover who asks permission to marry her?—What think you of the count Vondermulde?

Amelia. I think very well of him.

Colonel. But you don't blush, when I name him.

Amelia. (*feeling her cheeks*) No.

Colonel. No? Did you not dream of him?

Amelia. No.

Colonel. Did you not dream at all?

Amelia.

Amelia. (*recollecting herself*) O yes : I dreamt of our parson.

Colonel. What, as he stood at the altar, marrying you to the Count ?

Amelia. O no : I dreamt we were still in Franco-nia, he still my tutor, and preparing for his journey here. I wept so much—

Colonel. While the father laughed, and the mother scolded—Was it not so ? It was, indeed, a ludicrous scene—I remember it well.

Amelia. When I awoke, my eyes were really moist with tears.

Colonel. When you dream again of Mr. Ehrmann, Amelia, dream of him in the act of marrying you to the count. What think you of that ?

Amelia. If you command it, father, I shall endeavour to obey.

Colonel. No, zounds, no, I do not command it ; but I am anxious to know, whether you like the Count or not. You saw him at a ball, when we were in town last winter.

Amelia. Must I be in love with every man I see at a ball ?

Colonel. Amelia, Amelia, do not be childish. I wish to point out count Vondermulde, because he has been particularly attentive to you : he once danced a couple of graceful minuets with you, and perfumed your handkerchief with *eau de mille fleurs* ; and God knows how many soft tender things he has said to you beside.

Amelia.

Amelia. Well, God may know it : for I am sure I do not.

Colonel. No ?

Amelia. But if it be your pleasure, I will endeavour to recollect.

Colonel. It is not worth while to make the attempt :—what can only be found out by recollection, lies in a corner of the memory, not of the heart.—You do not then love the Count ?

Amelia. I believe not.

Colonel. (*aside*) No more do I. However, I must tell you how his visit and my questions are connected with each other.—His father is a privy-counsellor, a man of great power and wealth—in power, and very rich, do you understand me ?

Amelia. I am all attention, father, to your commands. But our parson has often told me, that wealth and power were the gifts of fortune, which I ought not to regard.

Colonel. Well, the parson was in the right ; but when they go hand in hand with personal merit, it is not the worse for them. Do you understand me now ?

Amelia. (*very ingenuously*) Perfectly well. But still, with your permission, father, is that the case with count Vondermulde ?

Colonel. (*at a loss what to say*) Why—Why—his father has done the state great service—he is my old friend, and forwarded my designs, when I courted your mother ; for that reason, I always had the greatest

LOVERS' VOWS.

est regard for him.—He now wishes very much to see his son married to you, and thinks you might, by degrees, bring yourself to love him.

Amelia. Does he think so?

Colonel. Yes; but you do not seem to be of his opinion.

Amelia. Not quite: but if my father commands—

Colonel. Zounds, I tell you I do not command. Marriage without affection, is worse than the condition of a galley-slave. Birds of a feather, alone flock together—The bull-finch is not a mate for the nightingale.—If you like to make a match of it, very well; if not, it cannot be helped. Your loving the young man, my dear Amelia, (*tenderly and affectionately*) is every thing: if you do not love him, I shall return him protested.

Amelia. I do not think, my dear father, I ever can love count Vondermulde: I have read so many novels, in which the symptoms of love are so totally different from what I feel.

Colonel. Do not talk to me of novels, the fellows, who write them, are generally very bad connoisseurs in the act of love. There are, however, certain symptoms, which we learn from experience.—Well, I will now examine you very strictly; and I entreat you, my Amelia, be candid and sincere.

Amelia. Have I ever been otherwise?

Colonel. Do you like to hear of the Count?

Amelia. Good things or bad?

Colonel. Good things, of course.

Amelia.

Amelia. I like to hear good things said of every one.

Colonel. But do you feel any odd sensations, when you hear him mentioned?

Amelia. (*shakes her head*)

Colonel. Nor at a loss what to say?

Amelia. (*shakes her head again*)

Colonel. Do you not sometimes wish people would talk of him, when you yourself have not courage to begin the conversation?

Amelia. (*shakes her head again*)

Colonel. Are you not anxious to defend him, when you hear him slandered?

Amelia. I hope I am anxious to defend any one, in that case, as far as I am able. Our parson—

Colonel. Forget the parson awhile, Amelia.—When you see the Count, what do you feel?

Amelia. Nothing.

Colonel. Nothing like pain, when he is near you?

Amelia. Not to my knowledge. (*recollecting herself*) Once indeed—

Colonel. Aye, now it comes.

Amelia. At a ball he trod on my toes.

Colonel. Again, Amelia, I intreat you not to be childish.—Do you not cast down your eyes, when he is looking at you?

Amelia. No: I never cast down my eyes at any one.

Colonel. Do you not play with your handkerchief, when he is talking to you?

F

Amelia.

Amelia. No.

Colonel. Do you not blush, when he tells you soft tales, and talks of marriage?

Amelia. Has he ever done that? I do not remember that he has.

Colonel. Hem! (*after a pause*) Pray do you ever yawn, when he speaks to you?

Amelia. No, my dear father, that would be rude.

Colonel. But have you not been ready to do so?

Amelia. Most certainly.

Colonel. Well, now I give him up.—Do you not think him very handsome?

Amelia. I really cannot tell.

Colonel. Do not you know what it is to be handsome? or have you neither taste or feeling for beauty?

Amelia. I think I have; but when I wish'd to look on a handsome man, I never look'd on count Vondermulde.

Colonel. That is a bad sign indeed.—On his arrival last night, how did you feel?

Amelia. Very angry: for I was just gone with Mr. Ehrmann to the little romantic hill in the park, when the footman came to fetch me to the castle, at the most unfortunate time—

Colonel. Unfortunate? Well, I will ask you but one question more. Have you not curled your hair to day with more than usual care, or put on, without thinking perhaps, a clean undress?

Amelia. This I think is still clean, though I wore it yesterday and the day before.

Colonel.

Colonel. (aside) I see there is nothing to be expected here.—You mean, therefore, to tell me, my dear child, that the Count is not the man of your heart?

Amelia. Not unless you command it, Sir.

Colonel. (angrily) Hear me, Amelia! if you once more utter that damn'd word—command—I shall be tempted to command it indeed. *(in a softer tone)* To see you happy, is my only wish; but happiness cannot be commanded. Marriage, my child, without a union of minds, is a most execrable duet. It is for that reason the great Creator of harmony and order has laid the sweetest concords in our souls. Well now, Amelia, I will send you to the parson.

Amelia. (cheerfully) To the parson?

Colonel. Yes; to be instructed in the duties of wedlock, which is more his province than mine; and when you have received his instructions, ask your heart whether the Count is the man with whom you should like to fulfil those duties—if he is, the will of Heaven be done. Till then let me hear no more of it. Henry! Henry! *(calling a servant who enters)* Go to Mr. Ehrmann, and tell him I wish to see him, as soon as he is at leisure.

Amelia. At the same time, present my devoirs to him.

[Exit Footman.]

Colonel. (looking at his watch) The Count takes a long time to dress himself. You have not breakfasted yet, Amelia—do it.

Amelia. (Pours out the tea.)

Colonel. What sort of weather have we? Have you been abroad?

F 2

Amelia.

Amelia. It is a beautiful morning : I was in the garden as early as five o'clock.

Colonel. The Count and I then will go coursing for an hour or two. Without that, I shall be at loss how to pass my time with him : he tires me to death. Oh, here he comes.

Enter COUNT VONDERMULDE, dressed en petit maitre.

Count. *Ah, bon jour, mon Colonel!* My lady, I kiss your hand.

Amelia. (*makes a silent curtsy.*)

Colonel. Good morning, Count ! though the sun now stands pretty high. In the country we rise early.

Count. *Pardonnez moi, mon Colonel,* I arose soon after six ; but my *homme de chambre* has been guilty of a *betise* that drives me to despair :—a loss, *pour le moment*, quite irreparable.

Colonel. I am very sorry for it, Count.

Amelia. (*Offers the Count tea.*)

Count. (*taking it*) Your most devoted slave ! Is it Hebe, or is it Venus *a là place d'Hebé.*

Amelia. (*curtsies and smiles.*)

Colonel. (*rather angrily*) Neither Venus or Hebe : it is with your permission, *Amelia Wildenhain.*—But will you inform us what you have lost ?

Count. For Heaven's sake, Colonel ! rather let me banish so *triste* a remembrance. I am so enveloped in a labyrinth of losses, that I am fearful I shall be compelled to write a letter.

Colonel.

Colonel. Do you consider writing a letter so hard a task?

Count. (*sipping his tea*) Like Nectar, my fair one! Nay, Nectar itself! and no wonder when it comes from your goddess-like hand.

Colonel. I bought this Nectar for Congou tea, Sir.

Amelia. But you have not yet told us, Count, what you have lost.

Count. You irritate a wound, my lady, which is just galled by the sight of you. But you command, and your slave obeys. *Mon homme de chambre, ce vaut rien.*—Ah, the fellow is a *mauvais sujet*.—The day before yesterday, when he was packing up for my journey. — *Henri*, says I, the little *pot de pommade* stands in the window. Mark me, madam, I said expressly the window. Be careful, added I, to put it up, and repeated it over and over again, three or four times. Thou knowest, *Henri*, said I, my very existence depends on that little *pot de pommade*: for take notice, my lady, that *pommade* cannot be made in this country: they cannot give it its admirable perfume. It is indeed *incomparable*, and comes *tout droit de Paris*. The maker of it is *parfumeur du Roy*. More than once have I been *de jour* with the princess Adelaide, when her highness has been pleased to say, *par Dieu, Comte*, the whole anti-chamber is perfumed as often as you are *de jour*.—Now I intreat you, my lady, and you, *mon Colonel*, to judge what I must feel:—forgotten, *absolument* forgotten:—the little *pot de pommade* stands in the window just where it did, *foi de cavalier*.

Amelia.

Amelia. (*smiling*) Shocking!

Colonel. I am fearful the mice will get at it.
(*sneering*).

Count. *Voilà, mon Colonel*, another reason to drive me to despair. And, would you believe it, this block-head, this *Henri*, has been thirty years in the service of our family:—thirty years has he been provided with every thing a man of his condition could expect. And where now is his gratitude? What has he done? for God's sake what has he done? Forgotten the little *pot de pommade*—left it just where it was; and, *o ciel*, the mice of this country will feed on the most exquisite *parfum* France ever produced. Till then I had always been patient; but it was utterly impossible to suppress my anger any longer.—I discharged him on the spot.

Colonel. How? what? an old servant of your family?

Count. I don't regard that: I have a better *in petto*—a most excellent fellow, who dresses hair like a god.

Amelia. And poor Henry must for such a trifle——

Count. Trifle do you say, madam, trifle?

Amelia. A trifle, to deprive an old man of his bread.

Count. What less punishment could I inflict on him? Has he not deprived me of my little *pot de pommade*?

Amelia. My intercession, Count——

Count. Would obtain any thing; but much as I honour the sentiments of your heart, I would not
abuse

abuse your goodness. The fellow has a *quantité des enfans*, who, when they come to *age mûr*, will assist that blockhead, their father.

Amelia. Children too? O let me intreat you, Count, not to discharge him.

Count. *Vous êtes aimable*, my lady, *tres aimable*. You command—your slave obeys. *Henri* shall kiss your petticoat.

Colonel. (*rubbing his hands aside*) No, no: he is not the man:—let the fool return home. (*To the Count*) Well, Count, will go out coursing till dinner time?

Count. (*kissing the ends of his fingers*) *Eravo, mon Colonel!* A charming thought! I accept your offer. You will see, my lady, what an elegant hunting dress I have. You will find it *du dernier goût*. I had it made expressly for this *tour*. And then my fowling piece, *mon Colonel!* The but-end in-laid with mother-of-pearl! Workmanship of a better *goût* is not to be found any where—my coat of arms too engraved in the centre.

Colonel. (*dryly*) But are you a good shot, Count?

Count. I never was out coursing but once in my life; *mais par malheur*, when I could kill nothing.

Colonel. There is an old fowling-piece that looks but shabby; (*pointing to one in the room*) but I fetch down any bird that flies with it.

Enter a FOOTMAN.

Footman. Mr. Ehrmann, Sir.

Colonel

Colonel. Very well. (*exit footman*) Come, Count, make haste, and put on your elegant new hunting dress: I shall be ready for you in a minute.

Count. I fly. It is a sacrifice, my lady, I make to the father of a most amiable daughter, to part with her for a single hour. [*Exit Count.*]

Colonel. I think, my dear Amelia, after what we have seen and heard, it is unnecessary to consult the parson. However, as he is here, and I wish to talk with him on some other matters, leave us to ourselves.

Amelia. (*going off*) Be assured, my dear father, I never can love the Count.

Colonel. As you like for that, child.

Amelia. (*meeting the Parson at the door, and addressing him affectionately*) Good morning, dear Parson, good morning. [*Exit Amelia.*]

Parson. You requested I would wait on you, Colonel.

Colonel. No ceremony, Mr. Ehrmann. I have to beg your pardon for sending for you, perhaps, at an improper time. I will, however, explain my business with you in a few words. I had sent me yesterday a most miserable translation from the French, which came from the press above twenty years ago. I am myself in possession of a very neat German original, of which I am happy to be the author. Now I am desired to strike out my name from it, and bind it up in the same volume with that insignificant translation. You, Sir, have been the corrector of my original;
and

bleffing and mine.—But Amelia is not in love with any one ; that alters the cafe.

Parfon. Will fhe never be fo, think you ?

Colonel. That is another queftion, to be fure.—Well, I do not infift on her being married to count Vondermulde. I only wifh to act in fuch a manner as not to offend the father, by difhonouring the bill he has drawn upon my daughter : for he has honoured me by many a friendly acceptance. I beg, therefore, my dear Sir, you will fpeak with my daughter ; and, after a fhort preface, explain to her all the matrimonial duties ; and when fhe is thus inftructed, I will ferioufly ask her, whether fhe is difpofed to fulfil thofe duties towards count Vondermulde. If fhe fay—No, I have done. What think you of my plan ?

Parfon. (*hefitating*) Indeed—I—I fhall obey your commands, and fpeak to the lady Amelia.

Colonel. Do, good Ehrmann.—This (*with a figh*) was one of the griefs which hung on my heart, but of which it is now partly eafed :—a more poignant grief ftill continues to weigh it down. You know what I mean.—Have you continued your enquiries ?

Parfon. I have done all in my power ; but, alas ! to no purpofe.

Colonel. Believe me, my friend, it gives me many nights of reftleffnefs and anguifh.—In our youth we are too often hurried into exceffes, to remedy which, in our maturer age, we would facrifice our whole fortune : for he who cannot look back with fatisfaction on his paff life, muft ever be miserable, efpecially

cially as the retrospect is so intimately connected with futurity.—But let us hope the best.—Farewell, dear Ehrmann ! I am going out coursing with the Count. In my absence, try what you can do with my daughter ; and dine with us to day.

[*Exit the Colonel.*]

Parson. (alone) What a command has he laid on me ! I am fearful (*looking round*) she will surprise me, before I am prepared for her.—At this moment it would be utterly impossible for me to talk with her.—a walk into the fields, and prayers, will reconcile me with myself : then the parson shall return to his duty ; but the man must keep aloof.

[*Exit the Parson.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE I.—*Open Fields, a Wood, &c.*

FREDERICK *alone, (carrying in his hand some small pieces of money.)*

TO return with this trifle, and see my mother dying!—No: I will rather drown myself, or run to the brink of the world.—Alas! my feet are, as it were, of lead: I can go neither forward nor backward.—There lies the cottage, which contains my mother:—Why can I turn mine eyes only towards it? Behold, here are blooming meadows! Why can I only look there, where dwells all my joy, and all my grief?—Is it this you call benevolence, ye human beings? (*looking at the money in his hand*) This small piece was given me by a gentleman on horseback, with a servant behind him, whose livery was stiff with silver.—This, by a lady on a sentimental journey, who stopped her coach to view the country, and to describe it, intending hereafter to publish her journey. “That cottage,” said I to her, and tears prevented my saying more, “is very picturesque,” added she, and stepped

stepped into her carriage.—This piece a fat priest, in a large wig, gave me, and called me an idle fellow and a vagabond : he cancelled his bounty by abuse.—And this (*in great emotion*) a poor beggar gave me, unasked. He shared his little all with me, and invoked the blessings of Heaven on me. This small piece, will one day have great weight, and the proud man on horseback, be glad to purchase it at any rate. (*after a pause*) What can I buy with all this ? Not even the nails for my mother's coffin—nor even a rope to hang myself.—There, (*looking at the distant town*) the towering pavilions and princely palaces appear to invite me to seek for pity. But, ah ! it does not dwell in cities : the cottage is its palace, and the heart of the poor its temple. Should one of those wretches, who go about to enlist soldiers, now come this way, for five dollars, he should have a robust young man. Five dollars ? What a pityful sum, often staked at play upon a single card !—May this sweat (*wiping the sweat from his forehead*) wrung from me by the anguish of my heart, fall heavy on you, my father ! May despair, with all its horrid train of ills, overwhelm you ! Only, at the last day, may you not pant for mercy and forgiveness, as my poor mother now pants for a drop of wine.

(*A noise of huntsmen is heard ; some dogs run across the stage ; a report of fowling pieces*)

Huntsmen ! Noblemen, no doubt. Once more, for the sake of a mother. Father of Heaven, let me find tender hearts !

Enter

Enter the COLONEL and COUNT VONDERMULDE.

Colonel. (waiting a short time for the Count) Come, Count, come on. That was a sad mistake. There the dogs run, (*pointing*) but they have lost the scent—they do not open.

Count. (out of breath) Tant mieux, mon Colonel, tant mieux. We can now breathe a moment. (*leans on his fowling piece, while the Colonel is looking round.*)

Frederick. (modestly advancing to the Count) Pardon me, my Lord, for presuming to ask your charity.

Count. (looking contemptuously at him) Comment, mon ami? You are very impertinent;—You have muscles like Hercules, and shoulders like Milo, of Crotona; and do you beg? I'll lay a wager you carry an ox.

Frederick. With your permission, I would try.

Count. Our police does not look enough after thieves and vagabonds.

Frederick. (with a sneer) So it seems.—Have pity (*turning to the Colonel*) my lord, on an unhappy son, who begs for a poor sick mother.

Colonel. (giving him a small piece of money) You had better labour for your poor sick mother, young man.

Frederick. That I would do most willingly; but her wants are too urgent. Pardon my freedom, my lord, but what you have given me is not enough to relieve her distress.

Colonel. (surprised) Not enough? But I am not disposed to give you more.

Frederick.

Frederick. If you are not destitute of humanity, my lord, give me a dollar.

Colonel. This is the first time a beggar ever directed me how much I should give him.

Frederick. I again intreat you to give me a dollar; it will save a fellow creature from misery and despair.

Colonel. You are mad, my friend.—Come, Count.

Count. Allons, mon Colonel.

Frederick. One dollar, my lords, one dollar! it will save the life of two human beings. (*when he sees they do not regard him, he kneels down*) For pity's sake, my lords, a dollar! you will never again buy a man's whole happiness so cheap. (*the Colonel and the Count pay no attention to him, and he jumps up in a rage, and drawing his sword, furiously assaults the Colonel*) Nay then, your purse, or your life!

Colonel. What? how? help! help! (*the Count runs away, and huntsmen come on and disarm Frederick*) Footpad! robber! (*to Frederick*)

Frederick. Almighty Powers! what have I done?

Colonel. Away with him—take care of him—secure him in the round tower.—I will follow you presently.

Frederick. (*on his knees*) I have only one favour to ask, my lord. I have forfeited my life, and you may do with me as you please; but send relief to my poor mother, who is dying in that cottage. Send there, and see whether I am a liar. I drew my sword to save her; and if she be saved, I shall not fear to die.

Colonel.

Colonel. Away with him, I say, to the tower !
and let him have nothing but bread and water.

Frederick. (*as he is going off*) Cursed be the man
who gave me life ! [*Exeunt Huntsmen with Frederick.*

Colonel. (*calling one of the huntsmen*) Francis, go
to the village ; find out the woman he has mentioned ;
and give her this purse.

Francis. I will, my lord. [*Exit Francis.*

Colonel. How strange an accident ! The young
man has something very noble in his countenance ;
but can it be true, that he turned a beggar and a
footpad for the sake of his mother ? Well, I will en-
quire into the matter. [*Exit Colonel.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Colonel's House.*

AMELIA *alone.*

Why am I not in good humour ? Who has offended
me ? I did not mean to come into this room—I in-
tended to walk in the garden ; but no ; I will not
walk :—yes, I will—I will go and see if my auricu-
las are still in bloom ; and, whether the apple ker-
nel, planted by Mr. Ehrmann, has shot up yet. O
it has, no doubt it has.—But should any one come,
and wish to speak with me, they will not find me
here, and be at a loss to know where I am.—No : I
had better stay here.—How tired I am ! (*takes up a
nosegay*) Hark ! did not somebody knock at the door ?
No : it was the wind.—I will go and look after my
canary birds ; but if any one should come, and not
find

find me in the parlour. Who can come? What makes me blush all on a sudden? (*half crying*) What is the matter with me? (*sobbing*) Do I cry?

Enter the PARSON.

Amelia. (*wiping away her tears*) Good morning, dear Mr. Ehrmann—dear Parson, I intended to say. Pardon me, that I am still in the habits of calling you Mr. Ehrmann.

Parson. Call me what you will, my Lady, I like to hear it from your mouth.

Amelia. Do you?

Parson. Indeed I do. But do I only fancy so, or have you really been crying.

Amelia. A little; I only shed a few tears.

Parson. Still you did shed tears. May I ask you why?

Amelia. I hardly know myself.

Parson. Perhaps you thought on your mother?

Amelia. I could say—yes;—but—

Parson. Some secret then? Well, I shall not notice what I have seen. Pardon me, my Lady, for trespassing on you at, perhaps, an improper time; but I come at the desire of your father.

Amelia. You are welcome to me at any time.

Parson. Am I? O Amelia!

Amelia. My father tells me the man who makes us wise and good, is more our benefactor than he who gave us life. So my father tells me; and (*casting down her eyes*) my heart tells me the same.

H

Parson.

Parson. How amply does this moment repay the
affiduity of eight years !

Amelia. I was a wild girl, and gave you much
trouble ; and it is but justice to reward you with my
love.

Parson. (*aside*) Good Heavens ! (*to Amelia*) I, I
come with orders from your father. But shall we be
seated ?

Amelia. (*offering him a chair*) Be seated : I had ra-
ther stand.

Parson. (*refuses to sit*) Count Vondermulde is ar-
rived here.

Amelia. Well.

Parson. And do you know for what purpose ?

Amelia. To marry me.

Parson. Yes : but, believe me, my Lady, your
father will not attempt by any means to force your
inclinations.

Amelia. I know it.

Parson. But he wishes to know the real sentiments
of your heart ; and I am ordered to find them out.

Amelia. What, with respect to the Count ?

Parson. Yes—and no :—I think he means with re-
spect to the marriage state in general.

Amelia. Why should I think about what I am igno-
rant of ? I know nothing of that state.

Parson. It is for that very reason your father wishes
you to be informed something of it ; and I will now
paint to you the two sides of wedlock, the good and
the bad.

Amelia.

Amelia. The bad first, Mr. Ehrmann, if you please:
I like to save the best till the last.

Parson. Well then, the bad side first.—When two accordant hearts meet, my Lady, wedlock has no bad side. Then the happy couple walk through life hand in hand together; and clear away the thorns that lay in their path with ease and cheerfulness. In time of storms, the stronger carries the weaker through them. Have they to climb a rock? The stronger gives the other his hand, and they soon arrive at its summit. Patience and Love are their constant companions.—What would be impossible for either of them singly, they do by their united labour without much difficulty; and, when the struggle is over, wipe away the sweat from each other's brow. Neither joy or sorrow ever visit the one without turning aside to the other; both smile or both shed tears: yet their joy is increased, and their sorrow rendered less keen, by being shared: for participation, while it heightens the bliss of the one, allays the pain of the other. Their whole life is like a beautiful summer's day, when a storm is past—a storm which enlivens nature, and makes even the sun-shine more bright. In the evening of that day, they stand arm in arm, surrounded by the flowers they have planted, and wait the approaching night. Then one goes to sleep first; and that one is most happy: the other wanders about bewailing his loss. And this, *Amelia*, is the only unhappy turn in such wedlock.

Amelia. Then let me be married.

Parson. The picture, my lady, was, perhaps, well

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drawn;

drawn ; but it must not be forgot that two lovers sat for it. On the contrary, when the bond of Wedlock is tied by Convenience, Levity, or Caprice, it has no good side at all. While the unfettered, single man, and the free girl, are enjoying their liberty, such an unhappy couple is carrying the chains of slavery, stigmatized on their foreheads by the characters of anguish---tormented by ideas of imaginary happiness, lost to them, and the less to be borne, because without the possibility of redress---and distracted by idle schemes of a happier life, laid down with nicety, but never, perhaps, carried into execution. Then we loudly repine at what, in any other situation, we should have endured patiently ;---then we look at the unhappy partner of life as the source of every ill that befalls us ;---then bitterness is mixed in our words, and coldness even with the semblance of regard ;---then nothing is more galling than husband or wife ; and what would give us pleasure in a stranger, is regarded with indifference at home. So they drag on their lives, till happily one of them dies ; then the other lifts up his head, and cries " Liberty ! Liberty !" And this is the only happy turn in such a marriage.

Amelia. Then let us not be married.

Parson. If I may be allowed to explain that exclamation, it is as much as to say---let us even not love.

Amelia. Well, if so, I will be married : for I do love.

Parson. You love ?---Count Vondermulde no doubt ?

Amelia.

Amelia. I pray you now do not name the fool.---
I love you. (*Laying hold of both his hands in an affectionate manner.*)

Parson. For God's sake, my Lady!—

Amelia. And will marry you.

Parson. Me?

Amelia. You, my dear Ehrmann, you.

Parson. Amelia, you forget—

Amelia. What do I forget?

Parson. Your nobility.

Amelia. What then?

Parson. O, for Heaven's sake, do not do that.

Amelia. You do not like me.

Parson. I love you, even as my life.

Amelia. Then marry me.

Parson. Amelia, have pity on me! I am a Minister of the Gospel, which teaches me to resist temptation.—But still I find I am a man.

Amelia. Have you not just drawn the most charming picture of wedlock, founded in harmony and love? If you refuse me, I am not the girl with whom you could wish to walk hand in hand, and share your joy and your grief.

Parson. Were I permitted to chuse, none but Amelia would be my choice.—Did we live in those happy times of equality of which poets dream, none, none, would be my choice but you. Yet, as the world now is—and we cannot change it—Amelia must marry a nobleman. The Baroness Wildenhain is born for no man below a baron. Whether Parson

Ehrmann

Ehrmann would have made her happy or not, is out of the question---But I say too much.

Amelia. Is out of the question? Can you really mean so? Have you not often told me, that the heart alone ennobles. Surely I should be married to a nobleman! (*laying her hand upon his heart.*)

Parson. Let me intreat you, my dear Amelia, to call your understanding to your assistance. There are many reasons to dissuade you from such a connection;—though I cannot at present recollect them.

Amelia. There are none.

Parson. There are many, indeed there are.---But my heart is so torn by contending passions, that the voice of reason is almost silent.—Consider only the scoffs and insults of your family. They will avoid you—will be ashamed of their new relation; and when upon any solemn occasion the whole family is assembled, you will be forgotten; even should your name be mentioned, they will shrug up their shoulders, and whisper your story to each other. They will forbid their children to play with yours, or to call them cousins;—will display all their pageantry, while an humble grey japanned coach, that serves to carry us to church, will be all you will have to oppose to them, and their splendid coats of arms. Away from home, they will hardly remember your name; and when they speak to you will be choaked with the word---Cousin, and call you Mrs. Ehrmann.

Amelia. And that will sound very well. (*laughing out*).

Parson.

Parson. You laugh, Amelia?

Amelia. Pardon me, my dear Ehrmann, how can I help it? You were my tutor for upwards of seven years, and in all that time, you never supported your doctrines by arguments so feeble before.

Parson. Indeed? I am sorry for it: for——

Amelia. And I am glad of it: for——

Parson. For——

Amelia. For now you must marry me.

Parson. By no means.

Amelia. By all means; no one knows me better than you do. You know, that even now, I am not a bad girl; and under your instructions, I shall improve every day. I will do every thing I can to make you happy.—O no; I shall make you happy without any trouble at all. We will live together the happiest life, till one of us falls asleep, and then the other will indeed mourn. But may that moment be far, far off! Come, give me your hand, or I shall be sure you do not like me.

Parson. It is a great thing to be an honest man, but a very difficult one. Did you know, my Lady, what I suffer, you would not torture me thus.—No: I cannot—I must not. I should sink under the very idea of making such a proposal to your father.

Amelia. I will make the proposal.

Parson. No: for God's sake do not! To him am I indebted for my present comfortable situation, as well as for the happiest hours of my life. And shall I se-
duce

duce his daughter—his only child?—Almighty God! thou see'st I wish to be just,—assist me.

Amelia. Hear me, Ehrmann. My father wishes to see me married.—He wishes too to see me happy. Well, then, I will be married, will be happy, and with you. This will I tell my father; and what answer do you think he will give me? At first, perhaps, he will be a little angry, and say, "You are a fool!" But soon after, he will reflect on the matter, smile, and say "If it be your wish, my Amelia, I cannot object to it." Then will I kiss his hand, spring through the door, and fly to your arms. People will hear that I am your bride, and come from every part of the village to congratulate me. They then will pray God to bless us, and God will hearken to the good people's prayers. We shall be happy, I am sure we shall. Would my father were returned!—I could not think what lay so heavy at my heart;—now I know, and my heart is free and light. (*Laying hold of his hand.*)

Parson. (*endeavouring to get rid of her hand.*) You will drive me mad, Amelia: nay, more, you will rob me of my peace of mind.

Amelia. (*again laying hold of his hand.*) Fie, fie, Ehrmann.—O Gemini! here comes some one to disturb us, and I had so many more sweet things to tell you.

Enter the BUTLER (*a comical old fellow*).

Amelia. Oh, is it you? (*with affected indifference.*)

Butler. With all due respect, Christian Loberecht Goldmann

Goldmann stepped up as soon as the happy news found-
ed in his ears.—

Amelia. (at a loss what he means) What news?

Parson. (aside) He has eaves dropped.

Butler. An old faithful servant of your house, who has, with all due respect, carried your mother, my Lady, many times in his arms, and afterwards many times received a box of the ear from her beautiful hand, offers you, on this glorious day, his congratulations. "Sing O Muse, and sound O Lyre!"

Amelia. My good Christian, I am not at present in a humour to listen to your flights of fancy.—But pray what occasion calls forth your poetry to-day?

Butler. O my dearest, my most beautiful lady, how can my muse do otherwise than sing on this joyful day? "Sound trumpets and kettle-drums! fiddles and shawms! and let your music flow smooth as waters o'er the meadows." There never yet was a festival celebrated in your noble family, when my humble muse was not at the service of my gracious patrons, both masters and mistresses. With all due respect, in forty years, three hundred and ninety-seven poetical congratulations have flown from my pen:—this day will bring forth the three hundred and ninety-eighth:—God knows how soon a solemn marriage may give occasion for the three hundred and ninety-ninth; and one year after (*laughing*) to the four hundredth.

Amelia. To-day is Friday, Christian, that is all I know of it.

Butler. True, my Lady, Friday—that is to say
I the

the day on which Providence has rescued your father from the most imminent danger.

Amelia. My father from the most imminent danger? Speak, tell me how, good Christian.

Butler. This moment comes Francis the huntsman, in a great hurry, and tells us a piece of scandal that will be spoken of, with all due respect, by posterity.

Amelia. (*with great anxiety*) Haste, tell me, what was it?

Butler. My Lord and the Count had been engaged courting somewhat more than half an hour—

Amelia. Quick, quick! I entreat you be brief.

Butler. My Lord had already killed a hare, the right fore-foot of which—

Amelia. For heaven's sake be brief:—come to the point at once.

Butler. A second hare was put up, and the dogs did their duty tolerably well—La Spadille, they say, particularly well—when all on a sudden my Lord and the Count met a soldier, who asked charity. Francis himself was at a distance, and saw my Lord, with his usual generosity, give him some money; but the infamous ungrateful villain drew his sword, ran after him, and would no doubt have dispatched him, had he not been prevented in proper time by the huntsmen. Then, with all due respect, I, poor old wretch, should have been under the sad necessity of composing a *Carmen funebre* and an *Epitaphium* for his Lordship, my master.

Amelia. Almighty powers!

Parson.

Parson. A footpad in the day-time is somewhat singular.

Butler. As it is, I shall write a ballad in the style of Burger's Leonora.

Parson. Have they secured the fellow?

Butler. To be sure, Sir! he is ordered to the round tower, and will be here immediately. Francis says his Lordship, too, will be here soon. (*Goes to the window.*) Upon my word, if the sun does not blind me, they are here already. *Sing, O Muse, and sound O Lyre.* [Exit Butler.

Amelia. (*looking out at the window.*) I never yet saw a footpad: such a man must have a formidable physiognomy.

Parson. Have you never seen the female parricide in Lavater's Fragments.

Amelia. A female parricide? sure there cannot be such a monster on earth. But see the young man comes nearer—his figure is interesting—his countenance noble—but grief sits heavy on his brow. O no, no: that youth cannot be a murderer. How my heart bleeds for him! Fie! look how rudely the huntsmen force him into the tower. Merciless wretches!—now they shut the door—now (*coming from the window*) he is left in darkness. What must the unhappy wretch feel!

Parson. (*aside*) Not more than I do.

Enter the COLONEL.

Amelia. Accept my congratulations, my dear father.

Colonel. For God's sake spare me, Amelia! Old Christian has tired me enough with his rhymes all the way up stairs.

Parson. I am sorry, my Lord, the tale is true: in the mouth of that talkative old fellow it appeared all a fiction.

Amelia. And can a young man of so interesting an appearance be really a robber?

Colonel. He was so; but I will venture to say for the first and last time in his life. The accident, my dear parson, was singular indeed: the young man was begging for his mother, and I gave him but a trifle, when humanity called on me to give somewhat more. However, my head being full of hares, and my ears only open to the noise of the dogs, I neglected it. I need not tell you, that in the search of our pleasures, we are too apt to forget the miseries of our fellow creatures. In short, he asked for more:—Despair pleaded in every look—I turned from him, when, enraged, and forgetting himself, he drew his sword. But I'll lay my life robbing is not his profession.

Amelia. I am sure it is not.

Colonel. How he trembled when he seized me! A child might have resisted him. Fie on it, that I did not let him escape! This trifle may cost him his life; and a dollar might have prevented the destruction of a fellow-creature. Would my servants had not witnessed the fact; but that I fear the force of a bad example. Come with me, into my study, Ehrmann,
and

and let us devise some means to get rid of him, before the strong arm of justice reaches him. (*is going off.*)

Amelia. Father, I have conversed a great deal with Mr. Ehrmann.

Colonel. About marriage, I suppose.

Amelia. Yes :—I have told him—

Parson. (*in confusion*) As you desired me, my Lord.

Amelia. But he will not believe me—(*interrupting each other.*)

Parson. I have explained to my Lady—

Amelia. Though, indeed, I spoke the real sentiments of my heart—

Parson. (*walking towards the study door*) May I ask—

Amelia. But his extreme discretion.—

Parson. In the study I will inform your Lordship the whole.

Colonel. What can all this mean? You hinder each other from speaking. Amelia, you have forgot good manners.

Amelia. Pardon me, my father ; but answer me, I entreat you one question. Am I not at full liberty to marry whom I please?

Colonel. Certainly, child.

Amelia. Now then, Mr. Ehrmann.

Parson. (*putting his handkerchief to his nose, as if it bled.*) Excuse me, my Lord, I must retire awhile.

Colonel. I shall expect you in my study.

[*Exit the Parson.*

Amelia.

Amelia. Stay a moment, father : I wish to tell you some things of the utmost importance.

Colonel. Importance? What I suppose my Amelia wants a new fan. [*Exit Colonel.*]

AMELIA alone.

A new fan, indeed? Would I had a fan! (*fanning herself with her handkerchief*) No : it would not be of any use : my warmth is in my heart.—Good heavens, how it beats! I love Mr. Ehrmann ;—dearly, fondly love him. How unfortunate that his nose should bleed at such a time. No : the Count does not appear in my eyes even like a man. When I look at my father, or my dear Ehrmann, I feel something like reverence ; but he is a coxcomb I cannot but despise.—How ridiculously should I conduct myself towards him. (*Going to the window.*) The door of the tower is still shut—I should like to know if they have given the young man any thing to eat or drink. Christian, Christian! (*calling at the door of the apartment*) Come up this minute—I wish to speak with you.—This youth interests me very much, though I cannot tell why. He has ventured his life for a mother :—that no bad man would do.

Enter the BUTLER.

Amelia. Tell me, good Christian, have you carried any thing to eat or drink to the prisoner?

Butler. Oh yes, my Lady.

Amelia. May I ask you what?

Butler. New brown bread and fresh water.

Amelia. Fie, Christian! shame on you! Go this instant

instant to the kitchen, and bid the cook let you have some meat for him ; and get a bottle of wine, and carry with it.

Butler. Much as I wish to obey your Ladyship, he must be content with bread and water at present, it being the order of my Lord.

Amelia. When my father gave such an order he was angry.

Butler. What his Lordship commands when angry, his humble servant must obey when he is not so.

Amelia. You are an old simpleton, Christian.— Shame ! so old a man, and not know your duty to an unhappy fellow-creature ! Give me the key of the cellar—I will go myself.

Butler. The key of the cellar ? I protest most solemnly, my Lady,—

Amelia. I command you to give it me.

Butler. (*giving her the key*) I shall immediately go and vindicate myself to your father.

Amelia. That you may do, if you please.

[*Exit Amelia, in haste, on one side, and the Butler on the other.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV.

SCENE I.--*A Dungeon within the Tower.*

FREDERICK *alone.*

How a few short moments may destroy a man's happiness! When I got up this morning, and the sun rose in his brightness, I sung my morning hymn, and, feasting at the table of gladness, was charmed with the idea of once more seeing my mother. Fancying myself in the street where she lived, I crept along under the wall to prevent her seeing me from the window; then tapping gently at the back door, I heard her coming down stairs—my heart beat high with expectation—she opened the door—and I flew to her embrace. But, farewell, delusive bubbles of happiness! I return to my native country, and the first object I behold is my mother dying; my first shelter is a prison; my first walk is to the gallows. Just heaven, have I deserved this fate? or must the crimes of the father be visited on the son? But, peace! I must not wander in these mazes, too intricate for human wisdom to tread. To suffer without murmuring—to submit patiently to heaven's will, is a lesson I often received from my mother; and she has, indeed, suffered much. Thou, O Supreme Being, (*kneeling, and raising both his hands to heaven*) well knowest why I am thus afflicted; and what thou hast decreed must be good.

Enter

Enter AMELIA, with Food and Wine.

Frederick. (rising) Who comes here?

Amelia. A -friend :—I bring you some refreshment :—you must be both hungry and dry.

Frederick. Neither.

Amelia. Here is some rich old wine : it will do you good.

Frederick. Rich old wine, did you say? Really rich old wine?

Amelia. I cannot tell from experience; but my father says it is a real comfort to the heart.

Frederick. I thank you, madam. You make me an inestimable present in this bottle of wine.—But, haste, dear, sweet lady, and send it to the adjoining village. Close to the inn, stands a cottage, in which is a poor, sick woman, almost starved :—if she be yet alive, let her have the generous draught. May it comfort you, dear parent! (*taking the bottle from Amelia, and holding it up*) Why can I not bring it to you, myself?—Now haste, haste, dear madam! (*giving the bottle back*) Save my mother, and you have saved me.

Amelia. (with some emotion) My good friend, surely you are not a ruffian, or a murderer?

Frederick. Thank Heaven, I still deserve the approbation of every virtuous mind.

Amelia. Keep this bottle for yourself :—I will go . and send your mother another like it.

Frederick. One word only before you go.—Who

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are

are you, dear, unknown benefactress, that I may offer up my prayers for you to Heaven ?

Amelia. My father is baron Wildenhain, lord of this manor.

Frederick. Almighty God !

Amelia. What ails you, Sir ?

Frederick. And the man whom I was going to murder to-day—

Amelia. Was my father ?

Frederick. And MY FATHER !

Amelia. How wild his looks are ! I tremble to remain with him any longer. [*Exit Amelia hastily.*

FREDERICK *alone.*

—Was my father !—Eternal Justice, thou dost not slumber :—The man, whose life I attempted, was my father ! One moment more, and I had been a parricide !—Horrid thought !—Peace, peace, my heart !—My brain will burst—all is distraction ! (*sinks down upon a chair*) If Providence had destined him to be a sacrifice, and I had struck the blow.—Just Heaven, should I have been guilty of his blood ? Or rather did'st not thou arm the hand of the son, to avenge the wretched mother, on the unnatural father. (*after a pause*) But the lovely and benevolent creature, that was here just now !—what new scenes open upon my mind ! This sweet maid is my sister ; and that foolish coxcomb, who accompanied my father, is, I suppose, my brother—a spoiled child, and the heir apparent—from his infancy taught to be proud of nobility and wealth, and now rioting in plenty, while I, his brother, am starving with—my mother.

Enter the PARSON.

Parson. Peace be with you, my friend.

Frederick. And with you, Sir.—From your appearance, I judge you are the pastor of this village—a minister of religion, and a messenger of peace. You are welcome to me !

Parson. I wish to give peace and comfort to your soul. I will not upbraid you : it is the voice of your conscience must do that, not mine.

Frederick. And when the voice of conscience is silent, Sir, do you not think the crime is at least doubtful ?

Parson. Or has pitched its tent in a wicked and hardened heart.

Frederick. That is not my case :—I would not change my heart for that either of a prince or priest. — Pardon my freedom, Sir, I did not mean to apply what I said to you.

Parson. And if you did, meekness is one of the doctrines of the religion I teach.

Frederick. I meant only to tell you, that though my heart is neither wicked or hardened, my conscience does not upbraid me with what has passed to day.

Parson. Do not deceive yourself: selfish pride sometimes usurps the place of conscience.

Frederick. What a pity it is that being no scholar, I can only feel but not give utterance to my feelings.—I intreat you, Sir, tell me what is my crime ! That I attempted to rob ?—Place yourself one moment in my situation.—Have you parents ?

Parson. No: they died while I was yet in my infancy.

Frederick. It is a pity, since you cannot, in that case, be a judge. But I will describe to you my condition as well as I can.—If we look round us and see how prodigally nature every where pours out her horn of plenty, bestowing riches and abundance on every place, and a son, at the same time, turns his eyes on a dying mother, whose parching tongue asks a drop of wine, and the wealthy man passes by that son, in the moment of despair, and refuses him a trifle to buy it—because, forsooth, a hare would escape, if he should deign to stop!—in such a moment, Sir, a sense of the equality of all men is roused, and the wretch, slighted by fortune,—for nature disregards none of her children—stands up for his right, and stretches out his arm, not to rob, but to take his due from the gifts bestowed on all;—and doing so—is right.

Parson. Such morals, my friend, if generally adopted, would soon dissolve the ties of society, and civilized men become an Arabian horde.

Frederick. Perhaps we should not be the worse for it:—among the hospitable Arabians, my mother would not have been left to starve on the highway.

Parson. Young man, you seem to have received an education superior to your rank in life.

Frederick. For whatever advantages I have, I am indebted to my mother.—You are now to hear the reasons why my conscience does not arraign me.—

The

The judge delivers his verdict according to the dead letter of the law;—the priest should investigate the motives of the action, and judge accordingly. In this way the judge would find me guilty, but you would declare me innocent.—Is it a virtue in him, who has just fed on the most luxurious viands, not to steal his neighbours coarse bread?

Parson. Well, Sir, for argument sake, I will admit all you have said. Let it be granted that, under such peculiar circumstances, you were justified in taking by force, what was not given to you;—will it also excuse your attempt to murder?

Frederick. To murder? no, no:—But I was only the humble instrument of a higher Power acting within me.—Of a chain of facts, you see but one link; nor can I let you see the whole of it.—I, therefore, have no excuse.—I shall meet my fate with calmness, convinced that a higher Power has written with my blood, the attainment of an higher aim, in the book of destiny.

Parson. It will be well worth my while, extraordinary young man, to get better acquainted with you, and to give to some of your principles, perhaps, a better turn. If your affairs will permit you to stay a few weeks with me, I shall be happy in your company.—I will also take your sick mother into my house.

Frederick. (*embracing him*) For my mother, I thank you:—for myself, you see I am a prisoner, that must soon meet his fate.—The short delay, which the formalities

formalities of the law, will give me, you may make what use of you please.

Parson. You are mistaken: Providence has placed you in the hands of a man, who is noble enough to honour your filial love, to pity your condition, and to forgive you what is past.—You are free!—He sends me to tell you so, and, after some friendly admonitions to set you at liberty.

Frederick. May I ask the name of this generous man?

Parson. It is the baron Wildenhain.

Frederick. Baron Wildenhain? (*anxiously*) Did he not once live in Franconia.

Parson. He did; but since the death of his lady, he is returned to his native estate.

Frederick. And the amiable young lady, who was here before you came?—

Parson. Is the lady Amelia; his daughter?

Frederick. One question more. The young perfumed gentleman, who was in his company when courting, is, I suppose, his son?

Parson. He has no son.

Frederick. (*hastily*) By the eternal God he has! (*recollecting himself*) I mean him who was with him when courting.

Parson. He is not his son.

Frederick. (*aside*) Thank heaven!

Parson. He is only here on a visit.

Frederick. I thank you for your information:—indifferent as it may appear to you, it is of the greatest
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est consequence to me. But, above all, I thank you for what you have done for me. I am sorry I cannot offer you my friendship in return; but friendship, you know, supposes equality of persons.

Parson. Friendship, like love, will either find or make equals.

Frederick. No, my dear Sir, let Love alone be that conjuror.—But one request more—Bring me to baron Wildenhain himself, and procure me a private audience of only a few minutes with him. I am anxious to return him my thanks.—But should I attempt to do it in the presence of other persons, I should be at a loss to deliver the sentiments of my heart; and that I wish to do.

Parson. Then, follow me!

[*Exeunt Frederick and the Parson.*]

SCENE II. *An Apartment in the House of the*
COLONEL.

The COLONEL sitting upon a Chair smoking.—AMELIA standing near and in Conversation with him.—The COUNT upon the Sofa, alternately handling his Snuff Box, and a Bottle of Scents.

Colonel. No, no, child, not now:—in the evening we will all go there together.

Amelia. But to be benevolent, is so sweet a task, that I should envy a servant who went for me.—Benevolence gives joy, and joy is a thing for which none of us are in too exalted a station.

Colonel

Colonel. Why do you talk of too exalted a station. Such foolish observations will make me angry. I tell you, I have sent there myself, and the woman is getting better. In the evening, we will all go to the village;—and Mr. Ehrmann shall be of the party.

Amelia. Well, even as you please. (*sits down and takes up some needlework*)

Colonel. (*to the Count*) You will be of the party, Count?

Count. *N'en doutez pas, mon Colonel.* The *douceurs* and *la bonté d'ame de Mademoiselle* will delight me. But I suppose the poor creature in the cottage has an infectious fever. *Mais.* I am in possession of an excellent and *incomparable vinaigre* against infection. We will prevent any danger with that.

Colonel. If you please, Count:—We have no better means of passing away your time than amusements of this kind.

Count. To pass away my time? *O, mon Colonel,* I could wish to pass my time only in the heart of *Mademoiselle*, your amiable daughter.

Colonel. You are very polite, Count:—Amelia, return your thanks.

Amelia. I thank you, Count. (*curtsying*)

Count. (*bows affectedly*).

Colonel. But tell me, Count, how long did you continue in France?

Count. *O mon Colonel,* you rip up an old wound. —My father had the cruelty to refuse me a thousand *louis*, which I had destined for my expences there.

But

But in spite of his refusal I should have staid some months in that seat of pleasure, had it not been for a particular accident.

Colonel. An affair of honour, no doubt?

Count. *Point du tout.* Paris was no longer a place for a nobleman. You have undoubtedly heard of the revolution! All Europe talks of it. *Eh bien, imaginez vous!* I am at Paris; I pass the *palais royal*; I am ignorant of what is going forward. *Tout d'un coup*, I see myself surrounded by *la Canaille*. They insult me;—I ask *qu'est ce que ca?* The fact was, I had no cockade:—do you understand me?—no national cockade. I cry out, *que je suis Comte du Saint Empire!* What do they do, but buffet me? and a nasty hog of a *poissarde* was impudent enough to filip my nose: nay, some fellows led me to a *lanterne*. What do you say now? What would you have done *à ma place?* I threw myself as quick as possible into a post-chaise, and hastened to cross the Barriers. *Voilà tout!* It is a sad history; but still I regret the delicious moments I spent in that *capitale du monde*. And I must confess, though I continued but a few months at Paris, that *mon savoir vivre, ma formation, mon pli, tout est François.*

Colonel. That is not my business to find out; but your language, at least, is by no means native.

Count. *O mon Colonel!* you pay me a great compliment.

Colonel. If you please to take it so.

Count. So all my *soins* were not *à pure perte.* I

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have

have taken all the pains in my power, for five years, entirely to forget my native language. What is your opinion, my lady? (*to Amelia*) Is not our native language totally destitute of every grace? and only to be endured when it comes from so graceful a mouth as yours? A man is going, I'll suppose, to make a *déclaration d'amour*—he intends a *chef d'œuvre*—Mark me well—He has studied his speech—*Helas!* he has hardly uttered a dozen words before his tongue is at a stand—his teeth turned *pêle mêle*,—and his gums at variance with his throat. If you do not immediately send a dozen French words after them, to put things in order, you run the risk of losing the faculty of speech altogether. *Et convenez, mademoiselle*, that it cannot be otherwise, because we have not those *célebres génies*, by whom the national taste is purified. I know, that *nous nous piquons aujourd'hui du bon gout, de la lecture, des belles lettres*; and one Monsieur Wieland has got great credit by some tales translated from the *mille et une nuits*. *Mais, mon Dieu*, the original is always French.

Colonel. But tell me, Count, why you take snuff, and apply your nose to your smelling bottle every minute? You perfume the whole room, and make the very air we breathe foul.

Count. *Pardonnez moi, mon Colonel*; but, it must be confessed, that the smoke of your tobacco is insupportable: my whole nervous system is affected by it—my cloaths will want airing for a month—and, I
assure

allure you, *mon Colonel*, even the hair, the very hair, attracts the filthy smell. These things might easily be pardoned in those *Messieurs de militaires*, who, having no occasion for good manners, will never learn *le bon ton du monde*. *Cependant*, it is impossible to bear the horrid stench any longer. *Vous m'excuserez, mon Colonel*, I am going to snuff the fresh air, and change my cloaths. [Exit Count.

Colonel. Bravo! I have now found out a way, my dear Count, to get rid of you whenever I please.

Amelia. My dear father! I could not marry such a coxcomb.

Colonel. Nor would I have such a son-in-law.

Amelia. I can't endure him,

Colonel. Nor I.

Amelia. Who can help it?

Colonel. Nobody.

Amelia. Love comes and goes wherever it pleases.

Colonel. It does.

Amelia. We frequently do not know why we love or hate.

Colonel. Frequently indeed.

Amelia. Nevertheless there are sometimes motives for affection and dislike.

Colonel. True, child.

Amelia. For instance, my dislike to the Count.

Colonel. Yes.

Amelia. And my affection for our parson.

Colonel. Very just, Amelia.

Amelia. (after a pause) I wish I were married.

Colonel. You will be in time.

Amelia. (after another pause) What can be the reason why Mr. Ehrmann does not marry?

Colonel. That he may tell you himself.

Amelia. (after a pause) He loves me.

Colonel. I am glad of it.

Amelia. And I love him.

Colonel. I am glad of that too.

Amelia. (pausing) I think, father, if you were to offer him my hand, he would not refuse it.

Colonel. So I think too.

Amelia. And I should like to obey him.

Colonel. (more attentively) Should you?

Amelia. O yes!

Colonel. Well, we shall see—

Amelia. Are you serious, my father?

Colonel. No.

Amelia. (sighing) No?

Colonel. No, Amelia: such a match cannot be. No repetition of the tales of Abelard and Eloisa—or Saint Preux and Julia. It will not do, I tell you; and Ehrmann himself is too noble-minded to attempt such a thing.

Amelia. You are his benefactor.

Colonel. At least he calls me so.

Amelia. It would be but just in him, then, to render the daughter of his benefactor, happy.

Colonel. But when this daughter is a child, and has childish whims, and wishes to day for a doll, which she would throw away to-morrow.

Amelia.

Amelia. Indeed, father, I am not such a child.

Colonel. Hear me, Amelia! Many a father would talk to you of your rank, and tell you, you must be married to a nobleman; but that is not the language I hold out to you.—I will not sacrifice my child to my caprice. A woman can never deserve, and, therefore, ought not to be proud of what we call, nobility.

Amelia. And the conclusion of all this——

Colonel. Is, that you shall have my permission to marry Mr. Ehrmann, if you can find no one among our young nobility whom you could love for his talents and virtues. But, surely, there are some among them, perhaps many, who are deserving of your regard, though you do not yet know them. Wait till next winter, when we will go up to town, frequent balls and assemblies, and then you may find a man to your liking.

Amelia. You speak of those, my father, with whom I am still unacquainted. How easily may I be deceived? Mr. Ehrmann I have known these eight or nine years.—I know him well—his heart is as familiar to me as my catechism.

Colonel. You have never yet, Amelia, been in love. Ehrmann educated you; and you mistake gratitude for love:—you do not, at present, know what love is.

Amelia. Did you not teach me, this morning?

Colonel. Did I? It is true, I asked some questions—

Amelia. Which fitted as exactly for Mr. Ehrmann, as if you had read my whole heart.

Colonel.

Colonel. Indeed ?

Amelia. For I love, and am beloved.

Colonel. Are you ? did he tell you so ?

Amelia. Yes.

Colonel. Fie ! that was wrong.

Amelia. O, did you know how I took him by surprise ?

Colonel. You took him by surprise ?

Amelia. He came, by your orders, to speak to me about the Count, when I told him plainly, I never would consent to marry that fool.

Colonel. But — him ?

Amelia. Yes, him.

Colonel. Well said, upon my honour ?—What reply did he make ?

Amelia. He talked a great deal of my nobility—my family—and of the duty he owed to you :—in short, he said every thing he could, to persuade me to abandon so impracticable an idea ; but my heart was not to be persuaded.

Colonel. Well, I highly approve of his conduct.—He certainly will not say a word to me about it ?

Amelia. No : that, he says, is impossible.

Colonel. So much the better : for then I may be supposed to be ignorant of it altogether.

Amelia. But I told him I would speak to you :—

Colonel. So much the worse.—You perplex me very much.

Amelia. And now I really do speak to you.

Colonel. So I hear.

Amelia.

Amelia. My dear father !

Colonel. My dear Amelia !

Amelia. Look—tears come into my eyes !

Colonel. Prevent their coming.

Amelia. (*gets up, as if looking for something*).

Colonel. What are you in search of ?

Amelia. My needle.

Colonel. (*pushes back his chair, and stoops, as if to assist her to look for it*) It cannot be far off.

Amelia. (*hanging on her father's neck*) O my father, my dear, good father !

Colonel. What ails you, Amelia ?

Amelia. Give me your consent.

Colonel. Let me alone, child ;—you wet my cheeks with your tears.

Amelia. I never shall love, never be happy with, any other man.

Colonel. Mere childish expressions ! Amelia, be a good girl :—Come, sit down :—we will talk of it another time.—You cannot be in haste ?—These things are not to be decided in a moment :—the knot is tied in the twinkling of an eye, but it holds for life. Many a girl has shed one tear, because her lover was refused her ; and, thousands, afterwards, because she had him.—For the first time, you have unburthened your own heart, and laid the load upon that of your father, who, for your sake, will bear it with patience. Time, I trust, will heal your wounds ; but if it will not—you must even send for your physician.

Amelia. O my good father ! (*with a mixture of gratitude and joy*)

Colonel.

Colonel. Your mother would not have been quite so good :—she was too proud of her ancestry, and was ever boasting of her sixteen generations of pure un sullied nobility.

Enter the PARSON.

Colonel. You come, most opportunely, Sir.

Parson. According to your orders, my lord, I have released the prisoner, who is now in the anti-chamber, and begs to return you his thanks personally.

Colonel. I shall be glad to see him. Were I to dismiss him without giving him money, I should do what I intend, but by halves.

Parson. He particularly requests to speak with you in private.

Colonel. Why in private ?

Parson. He pretends bashfulness ; but, I believe, he has some discovery to make to you.

Colonel. Amelia, go with Mr. Ehrmann into the next room.—I will presently tell you something, that will be interesting to both of you.

[Exeunt Amelia and the Parson.]

Enter FREDERICK.

Colonel. Go your way, with the blessing of Heaven, my friend :—you are free. I have enquired after your mother, who is recovering.—For her sake, I forgive you ; but do not attempt the same thing again.—Robbing is a bad trade.—Take this louis-d'or, and try to live honestly. If you behave well, my door and my purse shall always be open
to

to you. Now, God's blessing be with you, young man!

Frederick. (taking the louis-d'or) You are very generous, my lord:—you give me money, and are not sparing of good advice. But I desire your help in a matter of much greater moment.—You are a powerful man:—aid me, then, to bring to justice an unnatural father.

Colonel. How?—Who is your father?

Frederick. (sarcastically) O, he is a great Baron, of a large estate—esteemed at court, respected in the capital, and honoured in the country. Above all, he is benevolent, honest, and brave.

Colonel. And yet suffers his son to be in want?

Frederick. And yet suffers his son to be in want.

Colonel. Perhaps, my friend, you have deserved it:—you may have been wild, lascivious—a spendthrift, a gamester? Such things are;—and your father may think it prudent to let you march behind the drum for a few years.—The sound of the drum, is an excellent specific in such cases; and if this be your case, I am far from disapproving your father's conduct.

Frederick. So far from that, my lord, he does not so much as know me. He abandoned me, even in my mother's womb.

Colonel. What?

Frederick. The tears of my mother were all the wealth he left me.—He has never enquired after me—never taken the least trouble about me.

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Colone

Colonel. Monster !

Frederick. I am a Child of Love. My poor, seduced mother, has reared me in the midst of grief and sorrow.—She has, however, by labouring hard, afforded as much as was necessary to give me some education ; and I, therefore, consider myself worthy the regard of a father, who would be deserving of such a son. But, alas ! this is no concern of his ; and his conscience suffers him to continue regardless of the fate of his unhappy child.

Colonel. Regardless ?—That cannot be.

Frederick. When I was grown up, I had no other means of relieving my mother, than going into the army, bastards being precluded every other profession.

Colonel. Unfortunate young man !

Frederick. Nature has made sorrow and grief the companions of age, and bestowed cheerfulness on youth, to prepare it for the sufferings of declining years. I never knew cheerfulness.—My enjoyments have been the hard fare of a common foldier, and the severity of the serjeant into the bargain. But what is this to my father ? His table is covered with plenty ; and he laughs at the upbraidings of conscience.

Colonel. (*aside*) His story touches me.

Frederick. After an absence of five years, I return this very day to my native country, full of sweet filial dreams, and find my poor mother almost starved to death, with not so much as a bundle of straw to repose

pose her head on, or a roof to shelter her from the changes of the seasons.—Not one charitable being near her, to close her eyes, nor even a spot of earth to die on in peace.—But what is all this to my father?—He has an elegant country-house amply furnished with all the luxuries of life, and when he dies, the priest will exalt his christian-like virtues in a funeral sermon.

Colonel. Tell me, young man, what is the name of your father?

Frederick. That he has by falshood deceived an innocent and unwary girl—that he has given existence to an unhappy being, who curses him---that he has almost made his own son a parricide;---all these horrible crimes are trifles to be atoned for before the Supreme Judge of man, by a piece of gold—like that! (*throwing the louis d'or at the feet of the Colonel.*)

Colonel. Who is thy father?

Frederick. You!

Colonel. (*covers his face with his hands, and stands speechless.*)

Frederick. (*in great emotion*) In this house, perhaps in this very room, you betrayed the innocence of my mother, and to render her misery complete, begot a son. Now, Sir, I am again your prisoner—I will be your prisoner—I am a robber—I accuse myself—Let justice have its way. You shall attend my execution—shall see how vainly the ministers of religion will endeavour to give me comfort—shall hear how my last despairing words will curse you. Then come, and

stand near me, when my head is severed off, that my blood, nay, thine own blood, may besprinkle your garments.—

Colonel. Silence, I entreat you !

Frederick. And on your return from the scaffold, you shall find my mother breathing her last.

Colonel. Leave off, monster !

Enter the PARSON, hastily.

Parson. What is the matter here ? I hear a violent altercation. Young man, what have you dared to do ?

Frederick. I have dared for a moment to do your business, Sir. I have shook the sinner ! Look there, and see how a moment's lust is punished after twenty-one years. I am a robber, Sir, and a murderer ; but what I now feel is the bliss of heaven compared with what that guilty man endures. Now let justice have its course, that my blood may witness against him.

[Exit Frederick.]

Parson. For God's sake, my Lord, what is the matter ? I am all astonishment.

Colonel. He is my son, Sir ; he is my son ! Assist me ! Advise me ! Haste and fetch the sick woman from the village. Francis will shew you the house. Go, go !

Parson. What can I say to her.

Colonel. O God of heaven, your own heart must tell you that.

[Exit the Parson.]

COLONEL

COLONEL *alone.*

Do I dream? or have I not a son—a good brave youth? But yet I have not embraced him. Rudolph!

Enter RUDOLPH.

Colonel. Where is he?

Rudolph. Who? the robber?

Colonel. Villain, no! the young man who was here?

Rudolph. He has sent for the jailor.

Colonel. Kick the jailor down stairs when he comes. Let no one dare to lay hands on him.

Rudolph. Very well, my Lord. (*going.*)

Colonel. Rudolph!

Rudolph. My Lord.

Colonel. Show him into the green room next the dining parlour, and attend his orders.

Rudolph. You will be pleased to recollect, my Lord, that Count Vondermulde lodges in that room.

Colonel. Turn the Count out, and let him go to the devil. (*walking up and down the stage.*) [*Exit Rudolph.*] I now do not want a son in law: I have a son—a son who will preserve my name to posterity—a son in whose arms I will die. Yes, I will make atonement for every thing. I will not be ashamed of doing right. I will shew all my tenants that though I could forget, I cannot forsake, a child. Rudolph!

Rudolph. My Lord.

Colonel. Let him come in; intreat him to come
in;

in ; and let all who are in the antichamber come in with him. [*Exit Rudolph.*

Colonel. How little have I merited this blifs !

Enter FREDERICK, attended by Servants.

Colonel. He comes ! My fon ! my fon ! (*embraces him.*) [*The curtain drops.*

THE END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Inside of the peasant's cottage, the same as in the second act.*

Wilhelmina. I pray you go and see whether he returns or not.

Peasant. I am just come in from the road, where I have been looking backwards and forwards, but no body was to be seen.

Wife. Have only a moment's patience :—God knows where he is running for you.

Peasant. No doubt, he is gone up to the town.

Wife. There he will not get much :—townsfolks are very hard hearted.

Wilhelmina. But pray, go once more, and see whether he is coming now.

Peasant. I will.

[*Exit Peasant.*]

Wife. Did your son know what Providence has sent you, in the mean time, he would hasten his return.

Wilhelmina. How great is my anxiety !

Wife. How can you say that, when you have such a sum of money in your possession? You have no cause for anxiety now : the money was honestly come by.

Wilhelmina. Where can my poor son be? He has now been gone four hours :—some accident must sure have befallen him !—

Wife.

Wife. Do not be alarmed : how can an accident befall him ? You see it is the middle of the day :—take comfort :—at night we will have a good supper : the money you have will last you a long time, and procure you many a happy day.—You will now allow that our lord is a very good man ?

Wilhelmina. How could he know that I was here ?

Wife. God only knows ;—and Mr. Francis was so mysterious.

Wilhelmina. Is it possible he can know me ?—O yes, he knows me well.—How could he else have sent so large a sum ?

Wife. I do not believe that he knows you ; but the Baron exercises a general benevolence towards all, whether known to him or not.

Enter the PEASANT (scratching his head.)

Wilhelmina. Well, what now ?

Peasant. Nothing.

Wilhelmina. Gracious God ! where will my miseries end. ?

Peasant. Our parson is coming.

Wilhelmina. Here ?

Peasant. I suppose so : few weeks pass but he calls.

Wife. O yes, he often calls, and asks how things go on, and how people live together. If they are at variance, he makes them friends : if they are in want, he relieves them. Do you recollect, husband, when poor Michael's cow fell dead ?

Peasant. I do :—he gave him the best of his own.

Wife. Well, heaven's blessing be on him !

Enter

Enter the PARSON.

Parson. Peace be with you, my children!

Peasant and his Wife. } Sir, we kindly thank you.

Peasant. We are glad to see you here.

Wife. (*Bringing a chair, which she wipes with her apron,*) Sit down, I pray you, Sir.

Peasant. The weather is hot: I will fetch you something to drink.

Wife. Or some ripe pears.

Parson. Good people, I thank you.—You have a visitor here?

Peasant. Yes, Sir, a poor sick woman I took in from the high road.

Parson. God will reward you for your charity.

Peasant. I have already received my reward—I am as cheerful to-day as if we had church-mass.—Is it not so, Betty?

Wife. Aye, truly, is it.

Parson. (*to Wilhelmina*)—May I ask you, Madam, who you are?

Wilhelmina. I am, alas!—but I could wish to speak with you alone.

Parson. (*to the peasants.*) Be so good, my friends, as to let me speak in private with your guest.

Peasant. Hark ye, Betty! come along with me.

[*Exeunt Peasant and Wife.*]

Parson. Now, Madam, we are alone.

Wilhelmina. Before I tell you, Sir, who I am, and

N

have

have been, permit me to ask you some questions:—Are you a native of this country?

Parson. No: I was born in Franconia.

Wilhelmina. Did you know your predecessor in office?

Parson. I did not.

Wilhelmina. You are then entirely unacquainted with my history? and it is by mere chance that you came here?

Parson. If I find that you are the person for whom I so long have sought—I am not entirely unacquainted with your history:—I think you are the person.

Wilhelmina. You have then long sought for me, and think I am the person? By whose order did you seek after me?

Parson. By the order of one who interests himself much in your fate.

Wilhelmina. Indeed?—And for whom, I pray you, Sir, do you take me?

Parson. For Wilhelmina Boettcher.

Wilhelmina. Yes, Sir, I am that unhappy woman—the seduced Wilhelmina Boettcher; and the man who presumes to interest himself in my fate, is Baron Wildenhain—Baron Wildenhain, the robber of my innocence, the cause of my father's death.—He, who has abandoned me and my child—*his* child—to misery and want these twenty years, now thinks to atone for his guilt by this purse of gold—(*shewing him the purse.*) Now, Sir, you may be here for what purpose you please—to humiliate me still farther; to assist me, or
to

to tell me, that I must leave this neighbourhood, lest the sight of me, should upbraid this wicked man !— I have, Sir, but one thing to beg of you—to take back to the man, who has robbed me of all most dear, this purse ; and tell him, my virtue was not to be purchased for gold :—The peace of my mind, was above any price ; nor could gold avert one curse of my dying father.—Tell him, the poor, the wretched Wilhelmina, was even in her deepest distress, too exalted to accept of benefits from the man, who was her ruin. We can have no farther intercourse.—He has disdained my heart ; I scorn his gold.—He has trampled me under his feet ; I trample his gold under mine ; (*trampling the purse under her feet*)—But tell him, at the same time, that he has nought to apprehend from me. Let him be as chearful as he has been these twenty years past :—No sight of me shall disturb him. As soon as I recover my strength, I will leave this neighbourhood, where the name of Wildenhain, and the grave of my father, would disturb my peace.—Tell him also, I did not know that he was returned from Franconia—I really knew it not :—assure him of that, or he may think I came here, to throw myself in his way.—But, no :—He dares not thus suspect me. (*panting with indignation*) You see, Sir, that your presence, and my agitation, have exhausted my strength :—I have nothing more to tell you ; nor can the man who sent you, have much to tell me. (*with bitterness*) One thing, indeed he

might—It came perhaps to the Baron's recollection, that he once knelt at my feet—that he promised me marriage—that he called on Almighty God to witness his vows,—and solemnly pledged his honour—Ha ! ha ! ha !— (*with a convulsed laugh*) But let him not be disturbed:—I, for these many years, have banished these things from my remembrance.—

Parson. I have not interrupted you, madam, that I might acquaint myself generally with your sentiments, and particularly with respect to the Baron. You was not prepared for what you have said; and therefore I cannot doubt, but what you spoke, was the over-flowing of your heart. I am glad to have found in you, a woman endowed with a mind worthy of that atonement, which a man, noble and generous as yourself, can offer; and most willingly do I remove an error which gave, perhaps, occasion for more bitterness against the Baron, than you ever before had felt.—Did he know that the sick woman in this cottage was Wilhelmina Boettcher? and could he be so base as to send her only this purse?—Then he indeed deserved to fall by the hand of his son.—But, no; it was not so.—Look in my face:—my profession itself demands your confidence; nor have I ever been guilty of a falsehood:—By mere accident was it, that you became the object of his bounty, bestowed, as he thought, on one unknown to him.

Wilhelmina. Why, Sir, you will not persuade me that a present like this was made to me by mere accident

cident—To one unknown, a dollar might, perhaps, be sent by charity—not a purse filled with gold.

Parson. In the common train of events, your thoughts are just; but the accident was, in a great measure singular.—Your son——

Wilhelmina. What? my son?——

Parson. Be calm:—A good son, begging for his mother, touched the Baron's heart.

Wilhelmina. He begged of the Baron—of his father?——

Parson. He did; but recollect, they were strangers to each other; and for this son's sake, the mother obtained the gift.

Wilhelmina. Where is my son?

Parson. At the Baron's house.

Wilhelmina. And they are strangers to each other?

Parson. They *were*; but now, as the discovery is made, I am sent by the Baron—not to an unknown sick woman, but to Wilhelmina Boettcher;—not with gold in my hands, but with orders to tell you the dictates of my own heart.

Wilhelmina. Of your own heart? Oh, Sir! speak not in favor of this hard-hearted man:—the woman may forget what she has suffered by him; but let the mother have some consolation;—and for the thanks of a mother, let him receive the forgiveness of the woman whom he has wrong'd. How does my Frederick? How did he receive him?

Parson.

Parson. I left him in the moment of the discovery, and in the greatest agitation—Nothing was decided; but, I am sure, this very moment, while we are talking of them, they are embracing each other; and my heart is certain of the truth.

Wilhelmina. Again, your heart? How can the heart of the Baron be thus chang'd on a sudden?—a heart deaf to the voice of Nature, during twenty years!

Parson. You wrong him, madam? Hear me first, and then judge:—many a crime, briefly named, appears at first sight worthy to be abhorred. But let us weigh all the circumstances, and not start from the first to the last:—let us poise the motives of the culprit—examine the crime itself; and surely, we shall often be induced, more to excuse, than condemn.—I am far from excusing the Baron, on the whole; but I will venture to assert, that a single bad action does not imply a heart entirely depraved.—Show me the man, who boasts of immaculate virtue! And if you know such a boaster, do not trust him:—He is more dangerous than a repenting sinner. Pardon me, if I seem to moralise to excess.—I will now tell you the Baron's history, since he left you.—He loved you truly; and the strong prejudices of his mother, could alone have prevailed on him, not to have kept his word immediately. The war called him back to his duty:—he was dangerously wounded, and taken prisoner—was confined a twelve-month to his bed—
could

could not write, and did not receive any letters from you. This combination of circumstances, could not but weaken the impression, made by you, upon his heart:—(*Wilhelmina turns from him*) Nay, here me farther:—They carried him thus dangerously wounded, to the seat of a nobleman, equally respectable for his affluence and birth, and who was the father of a beautiful daughter—the young lady, touched by the story of the young man, attended him like a sister; and shed many a tear, which fell not unobserved. Thus, by a long continuance of kindness and gratitude, a knot was tied, which was only dissolved, a few months past, by death. Your image, for a time, was extinguished in his heart: he left his native estate, for one in Franconia—became a husband, a father, and lord of the manor. Nothing could bring you any more to his recollection, but grief and dissatisfaction with his wife; whose ill temper became known to him too late. Arrogant, choleric, capricious, and depraved as she was, she would bear no contradiction; and seemed to have saved her husband's life to no purpose, but to deprive him of comfort and repose.—At that time I entered into his house, in the quality of preceptor to his daughter, and soon became his friend:—many a time taking me by the hand, he has pressed it to his heart, and said to me, 'This woman revenges poor Wilhelmina's wrongs.' How many times has he, with imprecations, forsworn all the wealth of his lady, and deemed it a less splendid,
but

but infinite more happy condition to dwell with you ? At last, when the old rector of this place died, and he gave me the living, the first thing he said to me was, ' Go, dear Ehrmann ! procure intelligence of Wilhelmina.' In every one of his letters, he still repeated to me, ' Have you no intelligence of my Wilhelmina ?'—I have his letters still to shew you the truth of what I tell you ; nor was it my fault, that I did not sooner get tidings of you. But Providence has deferred them to the present day : for it preserved you for some higher views.

Wilhelmina. You have touched me nearly ; and my heart takes my feelings for conviction : But tell me—What, after all, is to become of me ?

Parson. The Baron has not told me what satisfaction he intends to make you : yet the satisfaction, which is your due, I know but one way to give.—When your strength, madam, allows you, come with me : a coach is ready for you, and the way is but short.

Wilhelmina. Go with you ? and in this dress ?

Parson. Why not ?

Wilhelmina. Shall I go, to reproach him by my wretched appearance ?—

Parson. Nobly thought :—let us first go to my house ; and my sister will supply you with a suit of her's :—

Wilhelmina. And shall I find my son there ?

Parson.

Parson. Most assuredly.

Wilhelmina. I will go with you for my son's sake: He is the only blooming branch of my hopes; all the rest are withered:—But where are the good people of the house? I must take my leave of them, and thank them.—

Parson. (*takes up the purse, and calls at the door*)
Neighbour John!

Enter PEASANT and his WIFE.

Peasant. Here, Sir!

Wife. Good God! the woman is on her legs:—
Well, I am very glad of it.

Parson. My good friends, I will take this gentlewoman with me, to my house; there she will be better accommodated.

Peasant. Well, Sir, 'tis true we cannot afford it.

Wife. We wished we had it in our power to do any thing; but our own condition—

Parson. You have acted a very charitable part:—
Let this be your reward, (*offers them the purse.*)

Peasant. (*puts his two thumbs into the button-holes of his waistcoat, and plays with his fingers upon his breast; then looks at the purse; and at last makes a sign of refusal.*)

Parson (*offering the purse to the Wife*) Do you then take it, mother?

Wife. (*plays with the corner of her apron, and finally makes the same sign as her husband.*)

Parson. What is the matter now?

O

Peasant

Peasant. Do not take it amiss, Sir; but we will take no money for an act of humanity.

Wife. Heaven will reward us for it. (*turning her eyes to heaven.*)

Parson. Yes, good woman, (*laying his hand upon her shoulder*) Heaven will reward you for the deed. God bless you!

Wilhelmina. Receive, at least, my earnest thanks.

Peasant. 'Tis all we ask.

Wife. We did all with a good will.

Wilhelmina. (*Shaking hands with them*) God bless you!

Peasant. Well, well; I wish you better health.

Wife. And when you are passing by, sometimes call upon us:—

Wilhelmina. (*wipes her eyes, takes the Parson's arm, and supports herself at the same time with her stick.*)

Parson. God be with you!

Peasant. (*pulls off his cap and scrapes with his foot*) Your humble servant, Sir.

Wife. We thank you for your visit.

Both. And hope you will call again soon.

[*Exeunt Wilhelmina and Parson.*]

Peasant. (*Shaking hands with his wife*) Now, Betty, do you not think we shall have a good night's rest, to night?

Wife. Aye, we shall sleep without rocking.

[*Exeunt the Peasant and his Wife.*]

SCENE

SCENE II. *A Room in the Colonel's House.*COLONEL (*on a sofa.*)FREDERICK (*stands near him, laying hold of his hand.*)

Col. So, young man, you have been in battles? Well, I fear, had you been brought up as Frederick Wildenhain, you would have been a spoil'd child; but brought up in hardships, as Frederick Boettcher, you are grown a brave man. (*embracing him.*) Doubtless you have suffered many a hard mischance, allotted to the lower ranks of society; and the spring of youth brought forth no roses for you.---But now it is over; and every thing shall be changed: you shall be legitimated, and I will introduce you every where as my son and heir:---Now are you satisfied with your father?

Frederick. But my mother---

Col. She shall not be neglected: I tell you, young man, your father has large possessions, and Wildenhain is one of the finest estates in the country:---some miles distant thence is Wellendorf, another of my possessions; and in Franconia, my wife---Heaven rest her soul!--has left me three noble estates.

Frederick. But my mother---

Col. I was going to tell you:---your mother may live where she chooses: if she likes not Franconia she may stay at Wellendorf. There is a neat little country house, a charming garden, a delightful neighbourhood;---in a word, a paradise in miniature:---there she will have plenty of every thing she can wish: nay more, she will enjoy her age with greater pleasure, from what she has suffered in her youth.

O 2

Frederick.

Frederick. How?

Col. And the distance is not great: when we rise early in the morning, and have a fancy to make her a visit, we order our horses, and in an hour's time are there.

Frederick. Well, but by what title, name, or character, shall she be known there?

Col. How? what?

Frederick. Shall she be called your house-keeper, or your unlawful mistress?—

Colonel. That question indeed demands——

Frederick. I understand you, Sir, and leave you to deliberate at your leisure: yet one thing I assert, and confirm it by the most sacred oath—My fate is inseparable from that of my mother. Either Frederick Wildenhain, and Wilhelmina Wildenhain; or Wilhelmina Boettcher, and Frederick Boettcher.

[*Exit Frederick.*]

Colonel. What does he mean?—He cannot mean that I should marry his mother! no, no, stripling, you must not dictate to your father. Much as I thought to have set every thing right, and glad as I am to have done so, and unburdened my conscience, this youth comes to throw a new stumbling-block in my path. O conscience, fain would I call you my friend! What do you tell me? What is to be done?

Enter PARSON.

Colonel. Well, Sir, I am glad you are come: I wish to speak to you this moment:—my conscience
and

and I are a little at variance, and quarrels of this kind belong to your court.

Parson. Your conscience is in the right.

Colonel. Softly, Mr. judge, be neither hasty nor partial: you do not yet know the subject of our quarrel.

Parson. Conscience is always in the right: for it never speaks but in the cause of justice.

Colonel. Well;—but I know not yet whether it does really speak or not. You are, Sir, in these cases better able to judge than I am: decide then, after you have heard me. This is the state of the question:—I have found a son, (*laying his hand upon the Parson's shoulder*) a youth, noble and amiable—warm like a Frenchman, proud like an Englishman, and honest like a German: him I intend to legitimate.—Am I there in the right?

Parson. By all means.

Colonel. And his mother shall enjoy her latter days in all the comfort she can receive. I'll make her a present of Wellendorf—there she may live as she pleases—there she may see herself live again in her son and grand-children.—Am I here too in the right?

Parson. By no means.

Colonel. No?—What else can be done?

Parson. You must marry her, my Lord!

Colonel. Who tells me so?

Parson. Baron Wildenhain is a man, who does nothing without reason: I stand here to plead for conscience,

conscience :---tell me your reasons why not, and I will tell you why you should marry Wilhelmina.

Colonel. What, marry a beggar ?

Parson. Is that your only objection ?

Colonel. Oh, I have many more.

Parson. Pray let me know them.

Colonel. I am a nobleman.

Parson. Well ?

Colonel. The world would point at me.

Parson. Well ?

Colonel. And shrug up their shoulders.

Parson. Well ?

Colonel. And---and---many other things equally unpleasant.

Parson. May I now be allowed to speak ?---But, one or two questions, before I begin : Was the misconduct of Wilhelmina your inducement to her seduction ?

Colonel. No ; she was chaste as beautiful.

Parson. Was it not with difficulty, that you conquered her virtue ?

Colonel. It was with great difficulty.

Parson. Did you promise to marry her ?

Colonel. (*is silent*)

Parson. Did you promise to marry her ?

Colonel. I did.

Parson. And invoke God as your witness ?

Colonel. I did.

Parson. And solemnly pledge your honour ?

Colonel. I did :---I did :---(*with strong compunction.*)

Parson.

Parson. Consequently, my Lord, your witness was God, who saw you at that time—who sees you now ; and you have pledged your honour, which you must redeem, to deserve the name of nobleman. Protected by the dignity of my office, I stand before you, and have a right to speak to you, as to the lowest of your tenants. My duty is to speak the truth, should I even risk your friendship by my words. Have you, in the rashness and indiscretion of youth, seduced an innocent creature, without thinking of the consequences of the fact ? and have you afterwards an opportunity of making atonement ? If you avail yourself of it, you will be still a man, deserving the esteem of every friend to virtue. But, has a voluptuous youth, by his inticements ruined an innocent maiden, robbed her of her virtue and happiness, to satisfy the desire of a moment ? has he pledged, in his intoxication, his word of honour, and sacrificed his conscience to his lust ? and can he atone for such crimes by a handful of gold thrown into his lap by chance, and which he does not deserve ? Pardon my vehemence, my Lord ! It is well timed, though it may defeat the purpose which it is meant to serve. O ye good old times of chivalry ! All our virtues, our honesty, our respect for females, were buried in your graves : your titles only and your duels have you left behind : to conquer virtue is now deemed heroism, and the boast of mirth at our licentious boards ; while the poor vanquished sufferer, overwhelmed with tears, curses the murderer of her honour, and, in pregnancy, harbours the idea of killing the
wretched

wretched innocent she breeds. Once more, my Lord, you must keep your word; you must marry her, were you even a prince:—a prince indeed may be delivered from such an obligation by the interference of the state, never by his conscience. Thank God, that you are not a prince, and can do as you ought; can redeem the peace of your conscience, at so easy a price: but farther still, this marriage is not only a sacrifice to merit, but will produce your greatest happiness. Little cause would you have of boasting, if you could only say, “Do I not perform my duty in marrying Wilhelmina?” But now as Wilhelmina brings you a dowry superior to that of a princess, as she reconciles you to your conscience, and brings to you with herself an amiable son, now you may with exultation exclaim, “Congratulate me my friends, I marry Wilhelmina.”

Colonel. (*during the Parson's speech disturbed and uneasy, at last rushes into his arms,*) Congratulate me, my friend! for I will marry Wilhelmina.

Parson. Sincerely I congratulate you.

Colonel. Where is she? Have you seen her?

Parson. She is in your house: to save appearances I introduced her privately,

Colonel. Well then, this very evening you shall marry us.

Parson. Nothing in haste, my Lord—nothing by stealth: the whole village was witness of Wilhelmina's shame; let it also be witness of the restitution of her honour:—let the ceremony be performed in public.

Colonel. I consent, with all my heart.

Parson.

Parson. And then the whole village will join with you in the celebration of your wedding-day.—Have you any objection?

Colonel. None, oh, none.

Parson. Are you now at peace with your conscience?

Colonel. In perfect peace :—but there is yet one thing which I fear, like a criminal arraigned before an awful tribunal—the first interview.

Parson. Oh, fear it not :—the heart of Wilhelmina will be your judge.

Colonel. Why then should I not confess it?—Yet prejudices are like old wounds, which smart with the change of seasons :—I am ashamed of my daughter, of the count, of my domestics :—Would to God the scene was concluded ! that I might see Wilhelmina, and enjoy the moment of her seeing me, without interruption !—Francis, Francis !—

Enter FRANCIS.

Colonel. Where are my daughter and the Count?

Francis. In the dining room, my lord.

Colonel. Tell them to come here.

[Exit Francis.]

You, Sir, (*to the Parson*) I pray you, stay with me, lest that monkey of a chamberlain should put me out of temper. I will tell him the matter concisely ; and if he has sense enough, he will order

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his

his coach, and go to the devil, with all his *pots de pommade*.

Enter the COUNT and AMELIA.

Count. *Nous voici à vos ordres, mon Colonel :* We have had a delicious promenade : Wildenhain is a paradise, *en mignon* ; and posses a little Eve *semblable* to that mother of men : *Il ne manque qu'un Adam*, who might take with joy the apple of death from her beautiful hand : *et il est trouvé cet Adam, il est trouvé !*—

Colonel. Who is found ? My Frederick, but not Adam.

Count. Your Frederick ? What Frederick ?

Colonel. My son, my only son !

Count. *Diable*—Your son ? *mon père m'a dit*, that you had no son : —

Colonel. *Votre Père* could not know it ; I did not know it myself a few minutes ago.

Count. *Vous parlez des Enigmes :*—

Colonel. In short, that young man, who attacked us, when you was so quick in your retreat—

Count. *Oh, Oui, Oui*—I recollect something about it :—*Parlez*—

Colonel. Well, that youth was my son.

Count. Pshaw—

Colonel. (*aside to the Parson*) I really, Sir, am ashamed of myself before that blockhead.

Parson. Fie, Sir ! a man like you ?

Colonel. (*aloud*) Yes, Count, he is my son, *à main gauche* ;

gauche ; but that is no matter : in a fortnight I marry his mother ; and if any one dares to show the least sign of mockery, let him beware.—And thou, Amelia ! Thou hast a brother.

Amelia. (with a graceful accent) Are you in earnest, my father ?

Count. What is the name of his mother, pray, and her family ?

Colonel. She is——but let the parson tell you.

Parson. She is—a beggar.

Count. *Vous badinez ?*——

Parson. Her name is Wilhelmina Boettcher ; if that concerns you.

Count. Boettcher ? I know no such family.

Parson. She belongs to the small family of Honesty and Virtue.

Count. *Conséquemment, c'est un mésalliance*——

Parson. Generosity and Honesty are going to be united with Fidelity and Love :—You may call this, *un mésalliance*, if you please.

Count. One must be an *Ædipus*, to unriddle all this.—*Un fil naturel ? à la bonne heure, mon Colonel ;—J'en ai aussi* : there are moments when instinct leads us to a pretty chambermaid : such things are : but what is to be done with such children ? put them to some trade, and you have done your duty :—my natural sons all are destined to be hair-dressers.

Colonel. But my son is to be a nobleman, and lord of Wildenhain and Wellendorf.

Count. *Me voilà stupefait !*—Madam, I plead your cause—they are going to ruin you.

Amelia. Do not trouble yourself, Sir, on my account.

Count. *Par dieu ! la fille unique, l'unique-Heritiere !*

Amelia. *Il me reste l'amour de mon Pere.* (*embracing the Colonel*)

Colonel. Bravo, Amelia! give your father a kiss. Count, you will oblige me, if you will leave us alone for a moment : a scene is going to be performed at which you will neither be allowed to laugh, or whistle.

Count. *De tout mon Cœur*: we have, if I am not mistaken, *clair de lune* ; and I shall still be able to return to town this evening.

Colonel. As you please——

Count. *A dine vrai, mon Colonel !* I am not come to take a *voleur de grand chemin*, for my brother, nor a *geuse* for a mother in law—*Henri ! Henri !*

[*Exit Count.*

Colonel. (*with Amelia still in his arms*) I have recover'd my breath ; and now, Amelia, one word to you :—Your father, more than twenty years ago, seduced a young and innocent woman, and gave being to a boy, who has been expos'd to misery ever since. This deed lay heavy on my heart. You may recollect many a sorrowful evening, when I sat with fix'd eyes in my arm chair, and paid no attention to your caresses : at such moments I was suffering the stings

stings of my conscience; was feeling how little all my wealth, nay you, my dear Amely, yourself, could avail me, without the consciousness of being an honest man. Now I have found them again—the mother and her son; and the Parson, as well as my own heart, are of opinion, that I ought to avow them publicly as my wife and son—What is your opinion?

Amelia. Can my father ask me?

Colonel. Will the loss, by which your father redeems the peace of his mind, be no sacrifice for you to make?

Amelia. The loss?—What loss?

Colonel. You was my sole heiress.

Amelia. Oh, my father!—

Colonel. You lose two estates—

Amelia. In return for which I shall possess a brother's love.

Colonel. And mine. (*embracing her*)

Parson. (*aside*) Why not mine also?

Colonel. For the victory over one of my prejudices, I am indebted to myself: for that over the other, to you, Ehrmann: a man like you, at once a teacher, and an example of virtue, raises his rank and condition to a level with the highest. If all your brethren in office were like you—where would not religion triumph?—You are a man of noble conduct; I am only noble by birth; but shall be soon above that title: my obligations to you are infinite.—Will you, my Amelia, take upon you to pay the debt?

Amelia. (*looks bashfully at her father; he quits her embrace,*

embrace, and makes her a sign to turn to the Parson; she flies into his arms).

Parson. Gracious Heaven!—my lord!—

Colonel. Not a word, dear Ehrmann.

Amelia. (*looking with fondness on the Parson*) Then you do love me?—

Parson. (*in tears, is going to kiss the Colonel's hand, who withdrawing it, embraces him.*)

Amelia. O how happy am I!

Colonel. Now let me for a moment indulge my feelings: one thing is still to be done—the most affecting of all: then, dear son! let the last rays of the setting sun, shine on the happiest family upon earth. Where is Wilhelmina?—

Parson. I am going to fetch her.

Colonel. Stay one moment—I have suffered much, and need some respite. There she will enter the room—there have I frequently seen her enter from the chamber of my mother:—then she was smiling: how shall I now endure her frown?—Frederick shall assist me—Where is Frederick?

Enter FRANCIS.

Francis. In his chamber, my lord.

Colonel. Bid him come here. (*to the Parson*) Now I am prepared—bring her to my arms!

[*Exit the Parson, who re-enters supporting Wilhelmina.*]

Colonel. (*embracing her speechless*).

Wilhelmina. (*half swooning*)

Colonel.

LOVERS' VOWS.

111

Colonel. (kneeling at her feet) Do you know me, Wilhelmina? do you remember my voice?

Wilhelmina. (weak, but tenderly) Wildenhain!—

Colonel. And will you forgive me?

Wilhelmina. O yes, yes!

Enter FREDERICK and AMELIA.

Frederick. (as he enters) The voice of my mother? ah, father! mother! *(filling the group)*

Parson. (raises his eyes to Heaven).

Amelia. (leaning on the Parson, and wiping away her tears.)

[The Curtain drops.]

THE END.

